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RITSCHLIANISM

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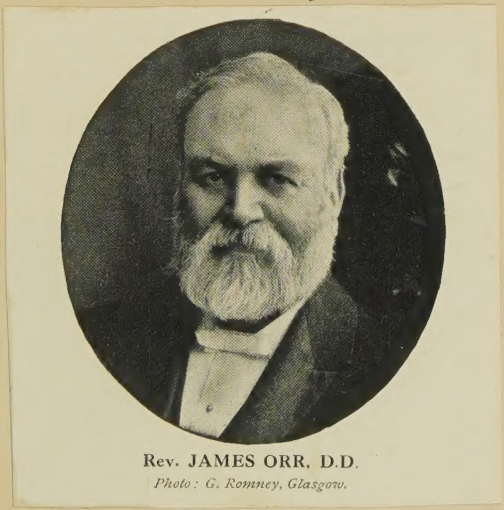
RITSCHLIANISM

EXPOSITORY AND CRITICAL ESSAYS

BY

JAMES ORR, M.A., D.D.

Professor of Apologetics and Systematic Theology in the Glasgow College of the United Free Church of Scotland



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PREFACE

THE papers included in this volume have, with two exceptions, already been published in various theological magazines. There they might have remained, but for the following considerations. The three expository Essays on Ritschl and his school which head the list appeared at a time when Ritschlian theology was still a *terra incognita* to most in this country. For that reason they attracted some attention. They have since been, and still are, frequently quoted, referred to, and occasionally adversely criticised. The papers themselves, meanwhile, have ceased to be generally accessible. This is a disadvantage to both author and reader which it is thought desirable to obviate, and the Essays are, accordingly, here brought together. They were of use to many at the time, and may perhaps be felt to be of service still.

The author has expounded his views on the Ritschlian system in his *Christian View of God and the World*, and in his *Ritschlian Theology*, in the "Theological Educator" series. The latter book

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suffers somewhat, for the purposes of the general reader, from undue compression, and from the necessity the writer felt, in view of the disputes with which the subject bristled, of giving chapter and verse for every statement he advanced. The Essays here republished, as simpler and more popular in character, may be found more suitable as an introduction to this influential phase of theology. Written independently, they have the drawback that to some extent they overlap; but any degree of repetition from this cause is perhaps compensated for by the fact that the standpoint of each is different, and, like pictures taken with a different focus, each helps to fill out the others, and may be regarded as the supplement or complement of the others.

Since these Essays appeared, the means of acquaintance with the Ritschlian teaching have abundantly multiplied. When they were written, hardly a single important Ritschlian book had been translated. Now the reader has access in English to leading works of Herrmann, Kaftan, Harnack, Schultz, Wendt, and finally of Ritschl himself, in an excellent translation of the dogmatic volume of his *Justification and Reconciliation.* The French phase of the movement is represented by a translation of Sabatier's brilliant book on the Philosophy of Religion. In America, Profs. McGiffert and Swing have laboured, not without success, to popularise the ideas and extend the influence of the school. In this country, Dr Garvie

is recognised as having furnished in his *Ritschlian Theology* one of the most important contributions to the exposition of Ritschl's system. All this has served to create and deepen interest in the Ritschlian movement, and to promote a better understanding of both its merits and its defects. The movement is still in progress, and, since the publication of the writer's volume, has undergone fresh developments, some of which call for illustration and remark.

In the conflict of parties and principles thus arising, the present writer, while trying, he hopes, to understand Ritschlianism, and to receive whatever stimulus and benefit it is fitted to yield him (and that is not little), has never felt able to join in the extravagant laudation in which some indulge regarding Ritschlianism as a system, nor to alter the conviction he early formed that, as a theology proposing to displace that of the ordinary creed, its basis is radically unsound. It may, indeed, in its more earnest adherents, succeed in outgrowing its limitations, and in throwing off its elements of weakness; but, in proportion as it does so, it may be predicted that it will be found drawing nearer, as happened before in the wake of the great impulse imparted by Schleiermacher, to the common faith of the Christian Churches, against which it is at present in arms. On the other hand, the danger is not slight that, on the negative side, it may issue in many falling back into pure humanitarianism and

rationalism. That the peril is not unreal may be seen from some of the papers in this volume.

Naturally, the author's opinons and judgments on Ritschlianism have evoked a good deal of criticism on the part of adherents or defenders of the Ritschlian positions. This is not to be complained of; but it creates an obligation, in the interest of the truth, of testing the value of these criticisms, and of rebutting them, where they are found to be erroneous or baseless. It justifies also the application of a fearless and sifting criticism in turn to new phases of the movement as they arise. The Essays in the volume called forth by this necessity are easily distinguished, and speak for themselves. The Essays not hitherto published are those on Ritschl's recent Berlin lectures, and on the school of Sabatier in Paris.

A word is perhaps necessary with regard to the paper on Dr McGiffert's book on Apostolic Christianity. The paper is retained with diffidence in view of declarations afterwards made by the respected author of his belief in fundamental doctrines and facts which his book seemed to place in doubt — declarations which are willingly accepted. The fact, however, cannot be ignored that the volume complained of continues to circulate without, so far as appears, change or explanation of any kind. This circumstance fully warrants the reprinting of the strictures made upon it at the time of its publication. The article is included, along with that on

Prof. Swing, as throwing light on the Ritschlian movement in its American form.

Two Essays, on "The Miraculous Conception," and on "Faith and Reason," are embraced in the volume, as cognate with its general subject and as bearing on Ritschlian controversies.

The thanks of the author are due to the editors of *The Thinker, The Expository Times, The British Weekly, The Presbyterian and Reformed Review,* and *The Princeton Theological Review,* for their kind permission to reprint the papers which appeared in their publications; also to the Rev. J. M. Wilson, B.D., London, for valuable aid rendered in the revision of the proofs.

CONTENTS

CHAPTER I

PAGE

THE RITSCHLIAN THEOLOGY 3

CHAPTER II

ALBRECHT RITSCHL 33

CHAPTER III

THE SCHOOL OF RITSCHL 53

CHAPTER IV

RITSCHL—AND AFTER: A Review 77

CHAPTER V

PROFESSOR SWING ON RITSCHL AND HIS CRITICS . 89

CHAPTER VI

PAGE

Professor Harnack on Christ and His Gospel . 115

CHAPTER VII

The Parisian School of Theology: "Symbolo-Fidéisme" 151

CHAPTER VIII

Dr McGiffert on Apostolic Christianity . . 179

CHAPTER IX

The Miraculous Conception and Modern Thought 221

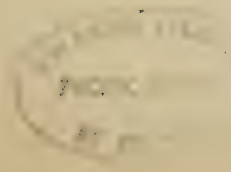
CHAPTER X

Faith and Reason 241

APPENDIX

On the Judgment of Value 265

THE RITSCHLIAN THEOLOGY



I

THE RITSCHLIAN THEOLOGY[1]

One of the most noteworthy facts in recent German theology is the rapid rise and widely extended influence of the school which takes its origin from Albrecht Ritschl. Not so long since Ritschl's was a name comparatively unknown in this country. Those who did know him knew him best through his valuable monograph on *The Origin of the old Catholic Church*, in the second edition of which, in 1857, he formally separated himself from the Tübingen theory of early Church history. His great work, *The Doctrine of Justification and Reconciliation*, appeared first in the years 1870-74, yet already his theology divides Germany into contending camps, and his disciples hold the chairs of leading universities. Scholars on this side the Channel are becoming aware that a new power has arisen abroad, and every year an increasing number of students find their way from our shores to sit at the feet of some of the representatives of the fresh teaching. A phenomenon

[1] *The Thinker*, August, 1892.

like this needs some explanation. For an effect of this magnitude there must be some adequate cause. It is worth our while to inquire what it is.

There can be no mistake as to the depth and intensity of this youngest religious movement. Ritschl himself died in 1889, but he has left behind him a band of able and enthusiastic followers, who carry on his work with a zeal and determination which show no sign of abatement. Probably no impulse of quite the same intensity has been given to theology since the days of Schleiermacher. The Ritschlian movement resembles that of Schleiermacher in this respect also, that the term "school" hardly describes the exact character of the relation of master and disciples. Ritschl's followers are affiliated to him by certain fundamental aims and tendencies, but already their theological standpoints and modes of apprehending Christian truth show wide divergencies. The chief part of Ritschl's influence lay, as can easily be perceived, in his large and impressive personality. He communicated impulse along fresh lines, and his disciples are working out his thoughts, each in accordance with his own individuality. None the less on this account is there any want of positiveness in the tone in which their various conclusions are given out. The representatives of the rising party boldly proclaim that they are in possession of a new and revolutionary method, which they yet hold to be the legitimate working out of the principle of the Reformation, and they have already taken great strides in applying their method to all the principal spheres of

theology. Herrmann in Marburg, and Kaftan,[1] the successor of Dorner, in Berlin, represent the party in scientific theology. Harnack is its Church historian; Schultz carries its spirit into Old Testament theology; Wendt into New Testament theology, etc. Other able members of the party are Gottschick, Reischle, Bornemann, Sell, several of whom are associated in the conduct of the new magazine, *Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche*, which exists to propagate their distinctive views. All this speaks to activity and enterprise, and the shoals of books and pamphlets which issue from the press on one side or other of the controversies evoked constitute an exceedingly lively chapter in theological polemics.

It would be easy to give a sketch of Ritschl's own positions in systematic form, adding some remarks on those of his followers, but this is not precisely what I wish to do. I wish rather to raise the question, What is the secret of the influence of this school? From nothing, nothing comes, and unless there were something both true and important in this Ritschlian theology, something that meets a real want and interest of the times, it could not take the hold it does. Simply to assail it, to point out its weaknesses, its inconsistencies, its defects, is not enough. It is not its

[1] Kaftan, indeed (*Das Wesen*, Preface), rather disclaims being a follower of Ritschl and representative of his theology, while acknowledging his obligations to him. But in the wide sense above indicated, which is the only sense in which we can speak of a Ritschlian party at all, Kaftan undoubtedly is a Ritschlian. [See further on the "school" of Ritschl in Essay III.].

inconsistencies and defects—and these are patent enough —which have given it its hold over men's minds. There must be truth and power in it somewhere; something which accounts for the influence it exerts over most diversely constituted natures, with the result of inspiring them, as it undoubtedly does, with a new enthusiasm for religion and for theological work. There is plenty of criticism of Ritschlianism; plenty of refutation and of impassioned defence. What I think there is some need for is a calm attempt to see where the good lies. Then from this we may proceed to appraise the defects which undoubtedly exist.

Wherein, then, it may first be asked, lies the secret of the influence of this new theology? Several answers might be given to this question, but perhaps the most explicit, and the one which comes nearest the centre of the matter, is this: It lies in the attempt to find a ground of certainty in religion which shall be independent of, and unassailable by, all critical theories and metaphysical speculations. We live in a time of great confusion and uncertainty of opinion. Controversies are raging on the most fundamental questions of religion. Criticism of the Old and New Testaments —investigation into the age and authorship of books— is revolutionising old beliefs. The natural sciences seem driving out belief in the supernatural. The philosophical schools give the most varied answers to the ultimate problems of thought and life. It is obvious that all this raises a serious consideration affecting Christian faith. Must a Christian—it may be asked—

have gone through all this mass of conflicting opinion, have investigated and satisfied himself on all these disputed points, before he is entitled to certainty in his religion? Must he, *e.g.*, have gone through an exhaustive course of criticism and apologetics, have arrived at certain conclusions in each of these departments, have settled his philosophical questions in a particular way, before he can be certain that he has salvation in Christ? If he does attain certainty in this way, what is the value of it? Is his assurance not liable to be overthrown again by the next new theory that is started, the next turn in the wheel of argument? But if this is *not* necessary—and it would be fatal to Christianity to assume that it is—there must be some ground of faith independent of criticism, and of all scientific and metaphysical theories. And if there is, what is it?

The answer which the Ritschlian theologians give to this question is—There *is* a certainty of Christian faith which puts a man in a position of independence to all these extraneous subjects. It is the special claim of the school to have shown that there is this ground of certainty, and wherein it consists, and how it can be justified. No one has spoken with more clearness and decision on this point than Herrmann, and his views may be accepted as fairly representative of those of the party. Herrmann's explanation of the matter is somewhat in this wise. The certainty of faith, he holds, springs immediately out of the experience of the revelation of God in Christ. It is the result of the direct

impression (*Eindruck*) which Christ makes upon the soul historically confronted with Him. You come into the presence of Christ as He meets you in the Gospel page. The impression He irresistibly makes on you is that in Him God is drawing near to you. It is not so much a doctrine of God you receive as a vivid perception that God is there present and acting before you. Christ does not merely speak to you of a new relation to God; He sets that new relation before you in actual, living fact. It is not a matter of theory or speculation at all. God there meets you in actual history. Christ as an historically existing person irresistibly draws you to Himself, and to the Father whom He reveals. In His presence you not only gain the knowledge of God, but courage to trust God. He lifts you above your guilty fears. The spiritual greatness you discern in Him is combined with a love and grace which banishes the natural distrust of your heart towards God, and gives you power to fulfil your moral destiny. All this is prior to theology or reflection. It is no reasoned conclusion, is connected with no metaphysical view of the Person of Christ, but is simply a *faith*—the result of the irresistible compulsion (*Zwang*) exercised by Christ over those brought spiritually into contact with Him.

This thought of the immediate *Eindruck* or impression of Christ on the soul confronted with Him is the key to so much in Ritschlianism—especially in Herrmannism—is reiterated so often by leading writers, that I make no apology for dwelling a little further upon it. The

reader will no doubt feel the expressions used above to be vague, but a study of the literature would probably convince him that the vagueness is not in my statement, but in the Ritschlian presentation itself. It is clear that the Ritschlian theologians build everything on the positive revelation in Christ. But it is not so clear what precisely it is in Christ which, according to them, produces this irresistible conviction within us of the reality of God's presence and working in history. Herrmann's statements would seem to suggest that the essence of the matter lies in the impression we receive of Christ's spiritual greatness and superiority to everything else in the world, which forces on us the conviction that there is a Power working in and with Him which is over all things—a Power gracious and good as Christ is. The following is only one out of many passages which express this idea:—

"Our certainty of God is rooted in the simple fact that in Jesus we meet with a man who must hold His own against the world. For he who experiences such a compulsion (*Zwang*) through the image of Jesus that he is obliged to concede to Him this dignity, receives with this at the same time the thought of a Power over all things, which is not otherwise actuated than through the disposition from which the life-work of Jesus has proceeded. God gives Himself to us to be recognised as this Power which is with Jesus. But then we are compelled to say that the existence of Jesus in our world is that fact through which God

so touches us that He opens up intercourse with us." [1]

Is not our apprehension of God on this showing, after all, not immediate, but of the nature of an inference?

An additional extract or two from Herrmann will further elucidate his meaning. I take them from his interesting rectorial address on *Evangelical Faith and the Theology of Albrecht Ritschl* (1890). He says there:—

"To be a Christian signifies, above all, that one gains this life-content. But this does not spring up in the soul of itself, but presses on us out of the history in which we stand. Not to despair of the world, and not to despair of ourselves, because Jesus Christ is an actual constituent of this our world —that is the beginning of Christian faith. To understand this, one must be able to see the peculiarity of Jesus, through which He lifts Himself clear away from everything which else may meet us in the world." [2]

More explicitly:—

"The ethical furtherance which we experience from others always has the result, that we get a quicker sight for what is distorted in them. Thus, they themselves take care that the ideal which we thought to

[1] *Der Verkehr des Christen mit Gott* (*The Communion of the Christian with God*), pp. 26, 27 (First Edition). [Expanded in Second Edition, pp. 47, 76; E. T., pp. 51, 78.]

[2] P. 20 (First Edition).

find in them always grows beyond them. If it happened to us in quite the same way with the person of Jesus, there would be no Christianity in the world. Assuredly we draw near to Him before all others only by questioning our consciences, and measuring Him by the ethical demand. But the nearer we come to Him, just the more does He become the interpreter of our consciences. . . . The ethical ideal does not grow beyond Him. For He makes it evident to us as something inexhaustible, which seizes our heart and life, and makes us feel in our deepest part how widely we are separated from it. It is simply a fact that the appearance of Jesus handed down in the New Testament acts thus upon us. Whoever will combat Christianity must before all dispose of the fact that numberless men are so laid hold of by Jesus. . . . But," he goes on, "with this alone that the historical appearance of Jesus so lays hold upon us, faith is not yet founded in us. It also happens that the same Man who becomes Judge and Conscience to the men affected by Him interests Himself in these men with a patient and unequalled love. While He makes the sinner insecure by the simple power of His personal life, He gives him at the same time a support by His friendliness. The men who through Him were brought painfully to feel how it stood with them felt themselves nevertheless on this account drawn towards Him. In this way then He forgives sins. . . . In that which he finds in the person of Jesus it becomes certain to the Christian that the power of the good not only judges

but redeems him. Thus is constituted Christian faith."[1]

Here then, according to the Marburg theologian, is a ground of faith absolutely independent of criticism, or of any kind of results brought from quarters outside itself. Suppose, then, you ask—Is this faith really independent of criticism? What, *e.g.*, if it could be proved—an extravagant supposition, of course, but one which, for that reason, better serves our purpose—that the Gospels were forgeries of the Middle Ages? Would not this affect our faith? For then what was held to be true on grounds of faith would be proved to be untrue on grounds of fact. Herrmann has his answer ready. It is in substance that your Christian faith is a guarantee to you that such critical results cannot possibly be true. It is not a faith grounded on criticism, but, having it, you know as a certainty that revelation in Christ is a reality, and that any critical results which would conflict with this must be in error. In his work already quoted, *Der Verkehr des Christen mit Gott*, Herrmann expresses himself on this point with great distinctness. Through this impression which Christ makes upon us, he affirms:—

"The doubt whether the image of Jesus which works on us in the Gospel belongs to legend and not to history is forthwith excluded. The evidence of the historical reality of Jesus always rests for the believer upon the significance which the knowledge of Jesus

[1] Pp. 20-22. The same doctrine is taught in nearly similar language in many passages of his *Die Gewissheit des Glaubens*.

has won for him. Only after this has been taken to heart as an indubitable fact of his life does that which testifies for the historical reality of Jesus stand out clear and visible before him. . . A judgment resting on grounds of historical investigation could only claim probability. But to Christian faith it is certain that Jesus has lived as the man who with His message of a kingdom of God has opened to men the possibility of an eternal life, and who at the same time was conscious that the existence of His Person in its life and death will realise this kingdom of God for all who do not pass Him by."[1]

Well, but—this is the objection which will next be urged—in entering on criticism, you cannot, from this standpoint, enter on it with an unprejudiced mind. How can your inquiries be impartial and presuppositionless, if you have already decided the most essential part before you begin? Herrmann, in reply, boldly concedes the case to be as the opponent states it. The Christian, he says, does not come without presuppositions to his inquiries. A presuppositionless criticism is a myth. The Christian least of all comes to his task with a perfectly unformed mind. He comes with his faith in Christ already given, and he cannot lay it aside. And though this cannot warrant him in tampering with historical facts, it gives him the certainty beforehand that the results will not contradict the verity already won. This, however, it

[1] *Der Verkehr*, pp. 92, 93 (First Edition). [Second Edition, p. 184; E. T., p. 177.]

should be added, only applies to the general and total result. It does not guarantee every detail, every miracle in the evangelical narratives. It does not guard against mistakes. This is an important qualification which opens up, as we shall see, a wide door to subjectivity.

Thus far every one, I think, will agree that the Ritschlian school has got hold of some sound and true positions, though perhaps not quite so novel as Herrmann and his *confrères* are inclined to represent. It is surely a true and important view to take, that theology must begin with the living and historical Christ. The emphasis laid on this truth is the service of the new school as against a one-sided rationalism and idealism. It turns back from scholastic dogmatisms and speculative subtleties to the freshness and reality of historical revelation. I would agree also that faith in Christ is the true πού στῶ for dealing with critical and other questions which threaten the destruction of our Christian certitude. This faith, born, as Herrmann says, of the direct impression which Christ makes on us in the Gospel, yields us the certainty that He who lives, speaks, and acts as Jesus does in the evangelical records, is no creature of fiction, but the veritable Son of God, the Saviour of the world. Herrmann's argument is but another way of stating the self-evidencing character of the Gospel revelation. It is true that in Christ God draws near to us, and that the Divinity alike of Author and of message is irresistibly borne in on us,

in proportion as our natures are thrown open to the influence they exert. Such certainty does this faith give, that the Christian is confident that no results which criticism can ever yield will overturn the essential basis on which the Gospel rests. But there is obviously a danger here, against which the Ritschlian school has not always duly guarded itself. In its desire to exalt the certainty of faith, this school is apt to push its independence of critical results too far. As if to show how independent it is of the worst that criticism can do, it is wont to make very wide concessions indeed to destructive criticism—concessions which, in fact, imperil its own principle. For after all it is to be observed that in the Ritschlian view independence of criticism does not mean that any and every critical theory is compatible with faith. It means that faith has a certainty which antecedes, and is not derived from criticism, but which at the same time involves the assurance that criticism can permanently establish nothing to its real disadvantage. For example, it is evident that a theory which utterly denied the trustworthiness of the Gospel records would be incompatible with the faith which affirms the historic reality of the Gospel portraiture of Christ. But the members of the Ritschlian school are wont to make such concessions in regard to the New Testament as are barely reconcilable with belief in its trustworthiness. They maintain the Gospel narrative in bulk, but allow it to be freely questioned in detail. Sayings and doings of Christ which do not suit them are easily

got rid of on critical principles. The presence of legendary and non-historical matter—sometimes in large quantities—is freely admitted. Harnack does not hesitate to affirm that there is no historical proof for the resurrection.[1] Thus, instead of using their principle of faith as a check against the inroads of destructive criticism—as, if it has any worth, they ought to do—they make concessions to opponents which practically mean the cutting away of the bough they themselves are sitting on.

Quite similar to the way in which the Ritschlian theologians would seek to make faith independent of historical criticism is the way in which they would keep it from all contact with philosophy, or what they call *Welterkenntniss.* Here we come on another of their most characteristic positions. For, given this faith and its contents, the question next arises—What are we to do with it? Can we help turning round upon it, and trying to relate it through intelligent reflection with the rest of the knowledge we possess—with, *e.g.*, that given through science or philosophy? No, says this school, this it is which has been the very bane of theology. It is this entanglement with philosophy — this attempt to rationalise Christian doctrines—this failure to distinguish between the method proper to theology and the method proper to the theoretical sciences—this mixing up of the pure dicta of religious faith with the results of speculation, which has been the evil leaven of theo-

[1] *Dogmengeschichte*, i. pp. 74, 75. [E. T., pp. 85-6.]

logical science. We strike here, then, on another cardinal tenet of the school—the absolute separation of theology from philosophy and theoretical knowledge generally. Two kinds of knowledge are distinguished by Ritschl—the one, religious knowledge which moves solely in the region of what he calls worth- or value-judgments (*Werthurtheile*), *i.e.*, judgments which express not the objective truth of things, but their value to us as subjects of pleasure and pain; and the other, theoretical or world-knowledge, which deals with things in the light of the causal judgment, and seeks to establish their objective (phenomenal) relations. The application of this distinction to the matter in hand leads to the entire separation of the two spheres in theology. Theology, according to Ritschl, is the expression in forms suitable to the religious consciousness (faith-propositions, as Kaftan would call them) of the content of the Christian revelation—"the right and complete limitation and clear fixing of the religious representations or represented facts which are included in the notion of Christianity."[1] Its safety is to keep its expressions in this purely religious form (co-ordinating and relating them to each other as a whole), and not to attempt to translate them into any other. Ritschl and Herrmann seek to justify this position by a theory of religion on the one hand, and a view of the nature and scope of the theoretic activities of the mind on the other, which exclude from the latter any possibility of a real knowledge of God, or indeed of a

[1] *Rechtfertigung und Versöhnung*, iii. p. 14 (Third Edition).

real knowledge of anything. Ritschl is thoroughly at one with Kant in thinking that the theoretic reason can give us no knowledge of God, or proof of His existence. We are thus driven back on practical postulates and religious *Vorstellungen*, beyond which, as it would seem, even revelation cannot raise us (for revelation cannot take us outside the essential limitations of our faculties).

On this subject, beyond most others, the Ritschlian theology seems to me to put itself in a distinctly false position. Faith and reason are stretched apart till no point of contact is allowed to remain between them. Religious knowledge is put in one compartment of the mind, theoretical or scientific knowledge in the other, and no relations of friendship or agreement are allowed to subsist between the two. It is a matter of indifference to theologians—so maintains Herrmann in his work on *Metaphysic and Theology*—whether philosophy be deistic, pantheistic, or whatever it is.[1] I humbly submit that this attempt to create a divorce between our religious consciousness and the theoretic reason must always prove a failure. The mind cannot be thus divided into two parts; we cannot hold contradictory propositions together; we cannot but seek to unite the different parts of our knowledge, from whatever source derived, into one whole of truth. Religion, says Ritschl—and his followers echo him—has to do not with theoretic propositions, but solely with judg-

[1] See also Herrmann's remarks in *Die Religion im Verhältniss zum Welterkennen und zur Sittlichkeit*, pp. 92, 93, and *passim*.

ments of value. That is to say, it is not objective truth we have to deal with in religion, but conceptions in the form adapted to satisfy our religious needs. One may spend months over this distinction of Ritschl's, and in the fluctuation and vagueness of his expressions not be sure that he understands him after all. Taken literally, his words would seem to land us in the purest subjectivism. Yet it is certain that Ritschl does not mean this. The truth seems to be that Ritschl has got hold here of a real distinction, but turns it to a wrong use. It is true that there is a distinction to be drawn between religious and theoretic knowledge. The religious mode of apprehension is dominated by a practical motive, and, in its immediate form at least, makes large use of the figurative element. It is emotional, poetic, imaginative—throws out words at its object, as Matthew Arnold says, without taking pains to subject its ideas to very rigorous analysis. It contains, as Hegel would express it, a large admixture of the *Vorstellung*. Theoretic knowledge, on the other hand, aims at being cool, clear, formally and scientifically exact. The language of religion, therefore, and the language of science are cast in very different moulds. The personal interest we have in the assertions of religion may warrant us to speak of them as worth- or value-judgments, in contrast with scientific judgments, which are supposed to be perfectly objective and dispassionate. But to allow this is very far from granting that religious truths form one class by themselves, and scientific truths form another, and

that the two classes can never be brought into any sort of relation with each other, or that it is wrong to try to bring them into such relation. My view of religion leads me to think (in this agreeing with Hegel) that it is at bottom because man possesses a rational nature that he is capable of religion at all. Religious truths are not arbitrarily to be cut off from reason, but rather, we must hold, are in deepest harmony with reason, and, rightly understood, contain in them the deepest satisfaction to reason. One thing I am sure of: a system which sets itself in antithesis to reason will not long maintain itself. To say that in the revelation of Christ *only* we have knowledge of God—that there is no such thing as natural theology, or any rational evidence for the existence of God—which is the assertion of this school—is practically to make the understanding an atheist. It is to set up dualism in the house of the soul. The sceptic will not be long in replying that, if reason and nature can give no evidence of God, that to him is a strong reason for believing that no God exists.

It has often been remarked that it is those systems which most decry metaphysics which generally are at bottom the most metaphysical. The Ritschlian school, with its denial of the right of metaphysics to have any say in theology, is a signal instance of this. To gain a footing for their position as non-metaphysicians in theology, the Ritschlians have been compelled to do the very thing they deprecate—commit

themselves to a particular speculative theory. Ritschlianism has a metaphysic, and a specially dangerous one, for its aim is to cut at the roots of theoretic certainty, and to leave us, in the sphere of religion, dependent on practical motives alone. So far, besides, from keeping their theology independent of their metaphysics, Ritschl expressly lays down that the right construction of theology depends on the theory of knowledge with which we start.[1] His aim, no doubt, is like Kant's, to establish a theory of knowledge which will leave religion free from theoretic control. The awkward matter is that in their theories of knowledge the Ritschlians are neither at one with their master, nor with one another. Herrmann, *e.g.*, rejects the peculiarities of Ritschl's theory of knowledge, and is nearly a pure Kantian. Kaftan, again, renounces Kant, and goes back to a basis of empiricism. It follows from this difference in the theoretical basis, that while agreeing in the point from which they set out—the positive revelation of God in Christ—the Ritschlian theologians go widely asunder whenever they begin to construct a theology in detail. It becomes evident, in short, that what really governs much of their construction is not the objective revelation, but their particular theories of religion, and the views they hold of what is necessary for the realisation of man's

[1] Thus in his *Theologie und Metaphysik*, he says, "Each theologian is under necessity or obligation as a scientific man to proceed according to a definite theory of knowledge, of which he must be conscious himself, and the legitimacy of which he must prove," p. 48. Cf. *Rechtfertigung und Versöhnung*, iii., p. 16.

practical ends.[1] Herrmann's system, *e.g.*, wears quite a different complexion in detail from Ritschl's; Kaftan differs in fundamental respects from both; while Bender, of Bonn, another disciple of the school, has gone off in the direction of pure subjectivism, not without some justification, it must be owned, in the fundamental premises of the school. This moving off of prominent members of the party on different and irreconcilable lines is justly regarded by its opponents as already indicating a tendency to dissipation and disintegration. Its real cause, I believe, lies just in that absence of hold upon objective truth which springs from the divorce of faith and theoretic knowledge. There are signs that this weakness in the original position of the party is making itself felt, insomuch that leading writers, as Kaftan and Reischle, are now taking up much more positive ground on the relation of faith and knowledge than is to be found in Ritschl.[2] Indeed, along the whole line indications are not wanting that under the stress of controversy the

[1] It would take us beyond the bounds of this paper to enter into these theories of religion, in all of which God is simply a postulate demanded by man's nature for the attainment of certain practical ends. What these ends are is determined by the particular theory of religion (Herrmann and Kaftan, *e.g.*, widely differing from each other on the subject); and while the postulates of the theory are supposed to be confirmed by the objective revelation, the test of the truth of the revelation again is its agreement with these postulates. Thus we move in a circle from which the Ritschlian theology cannot free us.

[2] Kaftan, of all members of the school, has given most attention to the positive relations of faith and knowledge. His views involve some important modifications of those of Ritschl and

school is beginning to modify some of its extreme positions, and the result will probably be, as happened with the followers of Schleiermacher, the movement of a section of the party nearer to confessional orthodoxy, while some, emphasising the negative tendency, will go further away.

What, then, it may now be asked, since their theological systems are thus divergent, holds these writers together, and still leads to their being spoken of as one party? In answer to this I would say that, in addition to the general affiliation to Ritschl, there are certain common aims and outstanding points of agreement which on the whole form a bond of union among them.

1. There is first that which I have already emphasised—the strong contrast they all draw between religious and theoretic knowledge.

2. There is the insistence on the positive revelation in Christ as the source of all true religious knowledge and life—that which alone can ground a right and satisfying relation to God.

3. Next—and this is a most important point—there is the central position which they all give to Christ's great conception of the kingdom of God. This is one of the principal merits of Ritschl—the new prominence he has given to this thought of the kingdom of God as a central idea in theology. It is with him the key to

Herrmann. He proposes also to discard the term "worth-judgments" as ambiguous and liable to misconstruction. [*Cf.* below, p. 60.]

the understanding of the whole Gospel revelation. All special doctrines are to be studied in the light of it. In God's purpose to found such a kingdom lies, from the Christian point of view, the explanation of creation and of the whole government of the world. Ritschl's conception of the kingdom, it is true, is somewhat bald and formal—too much after the Kantian model. It is simply that of the ideal moral society—an organisation of humanity, as he explains it, in which all the members act from the motive of love. To bring in and establish this kingdom was the great end of Christ's appearance in our world, and of His life and death of love. God's end was His end, and it is in this perfect identity of mind and will with God — this "solidarity" with God in His supreme aim in the creation and government of the world—that Ritschl finds above all the meaning of the predicate "Godhead" as applied to Christ. I shall refer to this again immediately. It is only now to be observed that while Ritschl's followers agree with him in the ruling place they allow to this conception, they do not always adhere to his special way of presenting the nature of the kingdom. Kaftan, in particular, shows a remarkable divergence; for while, with Ritschl, the kingdom of God is an ideal of moral fellowship to be realised on earth, in Kaftan's conception it is precisely on earth that it *cannot* be realised, and he throws it accordingly into the *Jenseits*—the Beyond.[1]

4. A fourth point of general relation in Ritschlian

[1] Cf. *Das Wesen d. christ Rel.*, pp. 211-215.

systems of the original type is the rigorous exclusion from theology of everything transcendental—*i.e.*, which lies outside the range of positive experience. This peculiarity necessarily results from the separation of religious and theoretic truth, and the consequent restriction of religious knowledge to so-called value-judgments. The Ritschlian system is perhaps best described as one of religious positivism. It starts with *data* of experience—the immediate impression made on us by Christ, and the experimental knowledge we have of His power to give us spiritual deliverance and moral freedom. This we can be sure of, because it lies within our consciousness. But beyond the verifiable in experience, Ritschlianism will not go. In the doctrine of God, *e.g.*, it will admit no speculation or inference as to His absolute nature, His immanent modes of being, or even His attributes, beyond what is directly apprehensible in His gracious manifestation in Christ. In Christology, again, it will not allow us to go beyond what we actually find in history. The pre-existence of Christ is cut off at one end; His exaltation and heavenly reign at the other. Where Christ is now, or what He is doing, are matters beyond our ken. Enough that He has lived and died, and that His image abides with us to give us the assurance of forgiveness of sins, and teach us confidence in the fatherly love of God. Here most of all, I cannot but think, the nakedness of the Ritschlian theology reveals itself. Here most of all it displays its inability to maintain itself as a truly Christian theology. Nothing

could be more unsatisfactory than Ritschl's Christology. He grants the "Godhead" of Christ, but the term, when analysed, is only a title of honour. Nothing metaphysical is to be imported into it. The attribution of divinity to Christ is only a value-judgment; that is, it states not what Christ is in Himself, but only the value He has to the believer as the Revealer of God to him. The view of Christ's atoning work which follows from this conception does not get beyond the removal of the subjective obstacles (ignorance, distrust, sense of guilt, fear of God) which hinder the sinner's approach to God. Righteousness as an attribute in God demanding the punishment of sin Ritschl denies altogether. God, in the Gospel conception of Him, is purely and solely love. Sin as we know it is the offspring of ignorance and weakness, and needs only to be repented of to be forgiven. Christ's death is the supreme test of His fidelity in His calling, and proof of His lordship (*Herrschaft*) over the world. In this way it guarantees to us the reality of that religious relation to God into the fellowship of which Christ invites us in His Gospel. Thus far Ritschl; but on these points also—especially on the Christology—his followers are feeling the need of some modification, and have already made several significant concessions. It is increasingly realised that we cannot stand thus simply dumb before the revelation which it is acknowledged we have in Christ, and refuse to ask who this wonderful Person is that bears the revelation, and whose personal character and relation to the

kingdom of God is so absolutely unique. We cannot rest content with simply formulating the value of Christ to us; we must ask what He is in Himself. There is a self-testimony of Christ to be reckoned with, and the greater the stress we lay on the historicity of the revelation, it is the more imperative that this testimony should not be ignored. The mind will not stay in the vagueness of expressions about Christ's "Godhead" to which the suspicion constantly attaches that they are mere metaphors. Thus in spite of their wishes the Ritschlians are forced to declare themselves a little further, and it is significant that, so far as their explanations go, they are in the direction of the necessity of recognising that metaphysical background in Christ's person against which at first protest was entered. In a remarkable passage in the *Verkehr, e.g.*, Herrmann expressly states that, in his opinion, if any one wishes to follow out this question of the union of Divine and human natures in Christ, "the Christological decisions of the old Church still always mark out the limits within which such attempts must move."[1] Kaftan goes yet further in restoring to its place of honour in theology the idea of the exalted and glorified Christ. Thus a process of change has begun which cannot stop without considerable further developments.

5. Another feature characteristic of the original Ritschlianism is its antagonism to every form of

[1] P. 46 (First Edition). A similar passage will be found in *Die Religion*, etc., pp. 438-9.

mysticism. I have spoken of its opposition to philosophy. Not less pronounced is the opposition of Ritschl and some of his followers to mysticism, or the doctrine of any inner immediate influence of God upon the soul, resulting in direct or immediate communion with Him. It will probably scarcely be credited that such a doctrine should be questioned by responsible theologians, so accustomed are we to think of direct spiritual communion as of the very essence of religious experience. Yet there is no mistake about the matter. Ritschl has expressed himself with unmistakable distinctness on the subject[1]; and Herrmann has written a treatise on the *Verkehr*, or intercourse of the Christian with God, with a view to make clear this very point. The object of this latter book—one of the best for getting a good idea of the system on this side—is directly to combat this idea of any mystical communion between God and the individual soul. The one way, according to Herrmann, in which God has entered into converse with men is in the historical manifestation of His Son, Jesus Christ. *There*, in history, you will meet God; will hear Him speak to you; may learn to trust His love and grace; may be strengthened by Him to overcome the world. But of any coming of God to your soul *now*—of any spiritual communion with Him otherwise than through these objective historical transactions of 1900 years ago—it is not allowable to speak. Direct access of God to your soul is precluded, at least

[1] Cf., *e.g.*, *Rechtfertigung und Versöhnung*, iii., 20, 21; and the *Geschichte des Pietismus*, *passim*.

in any conscious or recognisable way. What people take to be such is illusion and phantasy. One wonders, then, how revelation ever begun; how, in the case of Christ Himself, converse with God was maintained. For He had no earlier Christ to fall back upon to mediate communion with the Father. And what of the Old Testament revelation, or the inspiration of the prophets? This is historical positivism carried to an extreme which threatens the very existence of religion.

These outlines, brief as they are, will suffice, perhaps, to show that while the enthusiasm which Ritschlianism on its first appearance has awakened is explicable, and in a measure justified, there is considerable force in many of the strictures of its opponents; and that, when the glow of ethical fervour with which it is set forth is stripped off, it is a singularly meagre and inadequate type of Christianity that remains. I do not think that as a system it will admit to be brought to the test of Scripture—or, if the apostolic writings are set aside as non-authoritative, of Christ's own teachings and claims. I cannot accept its non-mystical view of religion; I cannot accept its divorce of faith and reason; I cannot accept its restriction of religious truths to value-judgments; I cannot accept its agnostic denial of the right of natural theology; I cannot accept Ritschl's practically humanitarian Christology; I cannot accept its denial of hereditary or original sin—for this is another tenet of the Ritschlian faith; I cannot accept its view of the divine righteousness, which with Ritschl is only another name for God's consistency in carrying

out His ends, and does not denote anything judicial; I cannot accept as adequate its doctrine of reconciliation; I cannot accept its ignoring of Christ's heavenly reign, and living action by His Spirit in the souls of men. The elements of value which I recognise in it are its fresh, full insistence on the self-evidencing nature and exhaustless spiritual potency of the revelation of God in Christ; its recognition of the uniqueness of Christ as the One in whose Person and work God's purpose has come fully to light, and through whom it has obtained historical realisation; the prominence it gives to the great Gospel idea of the kingdom of God; and, together with these merits, the protest it maintains against a one-sided intellectualism, and its constant reversion to the fact of a positive revelation. It may be granted to Ritschlianism that while theology and metaphysics cannot be so entirely kept apart as it thinks, there is need and room for a theology built up from purely Christian foundations, which shall give as adequate an expression as possible to the simple facts and truths of the Christian revelation set forth in their order and connections; and so far as Ritschlianism has helped by its protests to purge theology of scholastic and metaphysical conceptions really foreign to its essence, it deserves our cordial thanks.[1]

[1] [With the remarks on Herrmann in this Essay may be compared a review by the writer of the Second Edition of the *Verkehr* in the *Critical Review;* vol. iii., 1903.]

ALBRECHT RITSCHL

II

ALBRECHT RITSCHL[1]

It has been given to few men in our generation to exercise so wide and decisive an influence on theological thought as that more recently exerted by the subject of our present sketch—Albrecht Ritschl. Ritschl's independent activity, indeed, began as early as the middle of the century, but it is only within the last twenty years or thereabouts that the breadth and force of the movement proceeding from him have become fully apparent. Now it is seen that a quiet power was going forth all the while from that Göttingen class-room, which was leaving its life-impress upon a whole generation of younger theologians, and sending its pulses through unobserved channels into the thought and literature of other lands. Ritschlianism, at any-rate, is a phenomenon which no one can any longer afford to ignore, and it is natural that an increasing interest should be manifested in the personality and teaching of the distinguished founder of the school.

Ritschl was born in 1822, and died as Professor

[1] *Expository Times*, September 1894.

at Göttingen in 1889. His father held the position of General Superintendent of Pomerania. The bent of the young student's mind from the first was towards theology, and we find him successively at Bonn, Halle, Heidelberg, and Tübingen, sitting at the feet of the teachers of highest repute in these various seats of learning. Two things strike us particularly in this part of Ritschl's career, when his ideas were yet unformed, and he was simply groping in search of a system. One is the remarkable *receptivity* of his mind—his impressibility by the various influences which were brought to bear on him. As one of his critics has said, he traversed all the crises of the religious thought of his epoch. At Bonn he came under the powerful spell of Nitzsch, and even for a time venerated Hengstenberg. He was won to Hegelianism at Halle by Erdmann. He was on friendly terms with Tholuck and Julius Müller, though he afterwards spoke of them in highly disparaging terms. He sat for six months at the feet of the speculative Rothe. Thereafter we find him an enthusiastic and convinced disciple of Baur at Tübingen. At a later period we find him deserting Baur for Kant and Lotze. He thus, as above remarked, in his own spirit passed through all the phases of the theological thought of his time. It was this in no small measure which gave him his peculiar influence. He touched the thought of his age from within, mirrored its dissatisfactions, showed that he had correctly diagnosed its wants, and from the very weaknesses of the systems which

he rejected, gained wisdom for the construction of his own. The second thing we notice about Ritschl at this period is the assertion in the midst of these constant changes of standpoint—of this apparent subjection to external influences, which of itself might be interpreted to mean weakness—of a *strong and independent personality.* It was Ritschl's way of apprehending ideas, if we may so express it, not so much to argue or reason about them, as first to take them into his own spirit in the full strength of their original impression, then to test them by what he found to be their value for his personal wants. He applied to them, in other words, the method afterwards so characteristically described by him as that of "value-judging." The practical instinct guided him all through. Each step in his theological advance was really a new stage of self-assertion—a fresh verdict passed on what was needed for his full satisfaction. Even when nominally a Hegelian, the core of his thinking was ethical; and he tells us that it was his practical good sense which kept him from adopting the dialectic constructions of Rothe. The truth is, Ritschl never had, in the proper sense of the word, any strong dialectical interest. The dialectic of systems interests him from the historical point of view, but his own attitude is always external and critical; and the excursions he sometimes takes into the regions of philosophy are the weakest parts of his work. It is precisely on this account that later on he may have settled down into a modified Kantianism; for to a thinker of Ritschl's

stamp it is a positive relief to find a philosophy which demolishes once for all the pretensions of reason to have any knowledge on the subjects of religion.

We may say, therefore, that Ritschl was a Kantian in principle long before he was one in practice. His abiding bent was towards the ethical, but along with this, and subservient to it, were two other tendencies, which likewise gave a character to his work, and essentially contributed to its success. The first was a conspicuous talent for history and criticism. It was this which first powerfully attracted him to the school of Baur, then, at a later period, led him as decisively to separate himself from it. The second was the impulse to dogmatic construction. It is necessary to emphasise this, for the popular impression of Ritschl, derived from his attacks on the ordinary school theology, aided, perhaps, by an element of haze in his own style, is that he was the enemy of definite and articulated thought in religion. This is far from being the case. It is among the recurring complaints which he makes of his earliest teachers that he found them lacking in this faculty of system. Tholuck and Julius Müller as systematic theologians he found "confused." There can be no doubt that the systematic interest dominates Ritschl's thinking throughout, and only grew more powerful as time advanced. It is indeed to the fact that from his own new standpoint he was able to crystallise his thoughts into a comprehensive and well-compacted system—a system very different, no doubt, in idea and development from those which it sought

to displace, but an articulated dogmatic view none the less—that we trace no small part of its power over the minds of his disciples, and, more generally, its attraction for those—and they are always the majority—who desire to see truth presented in a connected and organised form.

Ritschl's first important work, however—that which fairly established his reputation—lay not in the region of dogmatic thought, but in that of Church history. The impulse he had received from Baur naturally led him to the study of early Christianity, and particularly directed his attention to the problem of the development of the old Catholic Church. In 1850, accordingly, when he was yet but twenty-eight years of age, appeared the first edition of his book on *The Origin of the Old Catholic Church*, a work already showing independent tendencies, but mainly dominated by the ideas of his master. A reaction, however, had begun, which ere long was to separate him entirely from Hegelianism, and from the historical theories of the school of Tübingen. In 1855 he broke formally with Baur, as he had previously done with all his earlier teachers. In 1857 his work on the Origins appeared in a second and entirely rewritten and recast form—that which it has subsequently retained, and in which it has had an effect on the study of early Church history little short of epoch-making. It would be impracticable here to give even the briefest sketch of the positions of this remarkable book—positions which, as Harnack truly says, have in substance "found accept-

ance, if not with all, yet with the majority, of independent critics."[1] It may suffice to say that a main point in it is the rejection of Baur's thesis that the old Catholic Church was the product of a fusion or reconciliation of Petrine and Pauline parties in the sub-apostolic age, and the development of the counter-idea that Gentile Christianity is not offhand to be identified with Paulinism, but was rather the result of a failure to apprehend Paul's profoundly evangelical ideas, and of the intrusion of the conception of Christianity as a "new law," which conception had for its counterpart the legalising of the outward framework and institutions of the Church, and the growth of the hierarchy and of sacerdotalism. On none of his writings, probably, did Ritschl bestow so much pains in respect of style and clearness and precision of thought and expression as on this, which exhibits, accordingly, a special excellence in these qualities.

In 1852 Ritschl had been appointed "Professor Extraordinarius" at Bonn, where for some years he had been lecturing as *Privatdocent*. He was now in 1859 appointed "ordinary" professor in the same university. Here he began those dogmatic labours which have since made his name famous. His dissatisfaction with existing systems led him to plan a reconstruction of theology on entirely independent lines. From scholastic and speculative theories he felt the need of moving back directly on the historical Personality and revelation of Jesus Christ. His attention was specially

[1] *Contemporary Review*, August 1886, p. 234.

directed to a right comprehension of the great doctrine of reconciliation—one of the *foci*, as he conceived it, of the Christian system, the other being the idea of the kingdom of God. In 1864 came his call to succeed Dorner at Göttingen. This transference was important to him in many ways, but not least in that it threw him in contact with Lotze, to whom he professes his obligations for furnishing him with a satisfying theory of knowledge. There are, he says, in the history of European philosophy, three doctrines of knowledge. The first is that of Plato. The second is that of Kant. The third is that of Lotze. This he accepts.[1] Ritschl attaches the very greatest importance to his theory of knowledge, which he maintains lies at the basis of his whole theology—a strange position for one who so consistently depreciates the intrusion of metaphysics into theology—but it is exceedingly doubtful whether he is entitled to speak of himself as in accord with Lotze. His view, as his critics have pointed out, is much more a slightly modified Kantianism. With both Kant and Lotze he held that we know the world of reality only through its effects upon ourselves—through the phenomena it produces in us. But whereas Lotze believed that by reasoning, if not through direct experience, we could arrive at conclusions as to the nature of reality beyond us, Ritschl, like Kant, treats the causes of our impressions as incognisable, and declares himself concerned only with their relations to ourselves. This theory, at any rate, seems to have

[1] *Rechtf. u. Vers.*, p. 20 (Third Edition).

furnished him with what he needed as a basis for the complete construction of his system, which soon thereafter was expounded historically, exegetically, and dogmatically, in the three volumes of his principal work—his *magnum opus*—on *The Christian Doctrine of Justification and Reconciliation* (1871-4). Later editions, with considerable changes, appeared in 1882-3, and in 1888-9. The range of this work, at once critical of other theories, expository of the author's own ideas, and under the head of "presuppositions" embracing a full treatment of the doctrines of God, of Sin, and of the Person and work of Christ, makes it the authoritative text-book on all that pertains to Ritschl's theology. Of Ritschl's other works it may be sufficient to mention his lengthy *History of Pietism*—likewise in three volumes (1880-6).

What now are the leading thoughts of a system which, in a comparatively short space of time, has so powerfully impressed a large number of talented and earnest minds, and occasioned what may be described as a new departure in theology? It is difficult in a few sentences to state them, while, of course, in a brief notice of this kind, anything like an adequate exposition cannot be attempted. To some extent it may be said that Ritschlianism is an inspiration rather than a system. Few of Ritschl's followers have adhered strictly to his standpoint, or slavishly committed themselves to the concatenation of his thoughts. The note of the school is rather its independence, leading sometimes to tolerably wide

divergences. Still there are common marks of the party, pivots, as it were, round which the thinking of master and disciples alike revolves, and some of these we may briefly indicate. We must distinguish between the formal character and the positive content of the Ritschlian theology. In a general respect the great watchword of the school is that indicated in the phrase *theology without metaphysics;* in a positive regard, the principle from which it professes to derive the whole organism of Christian truth is the *historical Person and revelation of Jesus Christ* as the Founder of the kingdom of God. The bane of previous theology, in the view of the Ritschlians, has been its adulteration with the presuppositions and ideas of a foreign philosophy. At an early stage theology succumbed in this way to the influence of Greek thought—mainly Platonic; the Middle Ages were dominated by Aristotelianism; the Reformation only partially shook off the bondage, and ere long lost itself in a new scholasticism; later times have seen the reigns of Wolffianism, of Rationalism, of Kantianism, of Hegelianism, etc. It is a primary aim of Ritschlianism to free theology from this dependence on foreign influences; to vindicate its right and ability to develop itself purely from its own principle—the historical revelation in Christ; and, above all, to assert the truth that in Christianity it is not the theoretical but the practical, not the intellectual but the ethical, which has the primacy, and that a pure theology can only be constructed from a practical standpoint. All this is healthy enough in its way; it

is the development given by the Ritschlians to these essentially sound principles which exposes them to so much well-grounded criticism. The argument is valid against the infection of Christianity with the ideas and methods of a *foreign* philosophy; but it may still be contended that in the discussion of its own problems Christianity cannot avoid coming in contact with questions which are in their nature philosophical, and to which—unless it is to abdicate thought—it must take up some attitude, and attempt some solution. This need not be done by incorporating alien philosophies, but rather by seeking the development of a *Christian* philosophy—one in harmony with Christian postulates and principles. All this, however, the Ritschlians would taboo. To justify their declinature, they extend their opposition to philosophy to the whole sphere of "theoretic" thought, and will have it that theology has nothing to do with theoretic thought at all. How then, we ask in some surprise, can we get any theology? For theology surely has to do with propositions, with the assertion of truths, with their concatenation into a system. Ritschl answers this by drawing a broad distinction between "theoretic" and what he calls "religious" knowledge,—a species of knowledge which depends solely on practical judgments, and the truth or falsehood of which is to be tested by practical standards alone. In religion, according to his favourite expression, we have to do only with "judgments of value" (*Werthurtheile*), that is, not with the objective or scientific aspects of truth, but

solely with their relation to our practical ends—the ends in this case being those of religion, namely (in Ritschl's view), the attainment, by the help of superior powers, of freedom from the hindrances or limitations of the natural life. Because this, in point of fact, is presumed to be attained in Christ's revelation of forgiveness and doctrine of the kingdom of God, Christianity is certified as true, independently of any other evidences. But here again the difficulty arises as to the possibility of keeping apart these practical judgments from all contact with theoretic considerations. If the *truth* of a judgment is affirmed, however it may originally have been obtained, it seems idle to say that it can be withdrawn from theoretic criticism. We cannot have two kinds of truth with no sort of relation to each other. The mind cannot be divided into compartments, with its theoretic knowledge on one side, and its religious knowledge hermetically sealed off from contact with the theoretic on the other. The two must be brought into relation, into comparison, into such unity as is practicable. The question, indeed, cannot help forcing itself upon us whether Ritschl's "judgments of value" ever rise higher than merely subjective representations, with the objective or scientific truth of which, in the strict sense, religion has nothing to do.[1] This, at anyrate, is his position, that theology must content itself with the tabulation and formulation in systematic connection of purely religious judgments, and must not attempt to impose

[1] This, of course, is far from Ritschl's meaning. *Cf.* above, p. 19.

on them any theoretic character. Here, if anywhere, is the "Achilles' heel" of the Ritschlian system—the point at which it is most vulnerable to hostile attack. There are many subordinate questions relating to the same subject, as, *e.g.*, whether Ritschl is not liable to the reproach of doing the very thing which he condemns, in bringing Christianity into dependence on a particular metaphysical theory; whether his Christianity *is* a pure transcription of the primitive or apostolic gospel, or is not really as far removed from that in its essential ideas and presuppositions as any of the theologies of the schools; whether he does accept *in integro* Christ's revelation, or only so much of it as fits in with his *a priori* theory of religion, etc. These are wide topics on which we cannot enter further. We can only attempt to show what his views are on some leading points in Christianity.

We have said that the *positive* principle in Ritschl's system is the historical Person and revelation of Jesus Christ. Here again, unquestionably, Ritschl strikes a true note. It was time the mind of the Church was recalled from abstruse theologies and scholastic refinements of doctrine to the fresh, living impression of Him whose life and work are the foundation of her whole structure. Largely to Ritschl is due the now widespread reversion to the idea of "the historic Christ" in theology. Ritschl himself, as we have seen, approached the subject on the side of a prolonged and exhaustive study of the doctrine of reconciliation. This led to his giving this doctrine a coördinate place with that of the

kingdom of God in his mode of exhibiting the Christian system. Christianity, he says, may be compared to an ellipse, with these doctrines as its two *foci*. In reality, however, the tendency of his teaching was to make the kingdom of God the all-embracing notion within which every other doctrine—that of reconciliation included—held its articulated place; and this has been the line adopted, I think without exception, by his followers. Here, also, in the prevalence which this notion has obtained in current theology, we trace another result of the influence of Ritschl. It is this notion of the kingdom of God, viewed as at once the highest (moral and spiritual) good for man, and the aim of his practical endeavours, which in the Ritschlian systems is made the standard for the determination of every other doctrine in theology — for example, of God, of the Person of Christ, of sin, of redemption. Yet, perhaps not quite logically, this notion is sought in turn to be derived from the historical manifestation of Christ, and the revelation of God as Father and as Love given us in Him. All metaphysical considerations are here to be excluded. The Christian idea of God has nothing to do with the God of natural theology. God is solely and entirely for our faith "the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." The character of this Being is pure love. His world-purpose (that for which, therefore, the world in the religious view is held to be created) is the founding of the kingdom of God. It must be noted, however, that this kingdom but exists for the realisation of the end—practically Kantian—

independently posited in the Ritschlian theory of religion. The same conception determines for us the place and worth of Jesus Christ in His own religion. Jesus is one with God in His complete identification of will with the Father's purpose of founding a kingdom of God, and in His entire surrender of Himself to this as His life-task. He is likewise perfectly equipped for this task; realises in His own Person the true religious relation of man to God; is in this respect the archetype and exemplar of man in His normal relation to God in His kingdom, as well as the Founder of the latter; finally, in so far as men are sinners, kept back from God by the sense of their guilt, Christ perfectly reveals the grace and truth of God, and His free forgiveness of sins. How Christ should arrive at this knowledge of God, should possess these extraordinary endowments, should stand in this unique relation to God and to His purpose,—in short, should be the Person that He is, and should stand in the relation to God and man that He does—is a mystery into which we are not permitted to pry. To raise questions of this kind would be to enter the prohibited region of "metaphysics." The fact must suffice us that it is so. We must not even attempt to ask too precisely what is meant by "revelation" in this connection. These questions are better left in convenient vagueness. While, accordingly, Ritschl continues to speak of the "Godhead" of Christ, we are warned against putting on this phrase any "metaphysical" interpretation. The term is to be understood in consonance with the

general principles of the school as an expression for the *religious* value which Christ has to the Church as the revealer and representative of God. But the question still presses—Can we stop here? Will Christ's own utterances and claims, His present lordship over His Church, the words and functions ascribed to Him, permit us to stop here? Or dare we apply this term "Godhead" in any metaphorical sense to one who essentially is *not* God? Part of this difficulty Ritschl avoids by declining to occupy himself with any but the historical and earthly aspects of Christ's life. Whether Christ ever rose from the dead is left a moot question in Ritschlian circles, while the whole range of scriptural doctrine regarding His heavenly reign, and His return for the work of resurrection and judgment, is put aside as non-esssential. But is this to take pure apostolic Christianity, and preserve it in its simplicity from unauthorised corruption, or is it not rather to exercise a criticism on Christianity determined by Ritschl's peculiar philosophical presuppositions? It is as possible in the interests of *a priori* theory to mutilate Christianity by subtraction, as it is for philosophy to vitiate its essence by addition.

Intimately connected with the doctrine of Christ's Person and work is the Ritschlian view of sin, and of God's relation to it. Since God, in Ritschl's conception, is purely love, it follows that there is nothing properly judicial or retributive in His dealings with the world. Wrath, at most, has solely an eschatological significance, and then only in a hypothetical

case. Original sin Ritschl denies. Actual sin is due so largely to ignorance that is a proper subject of pardon. A feeling of guilt haunts the sinner, and separates him from God. But the revelation of God's grace in Christ dispels these fears, and enables the sinner with confidence to return to the Father. Christ's death, which, in respect of Christ Himself, is the supreme trial of His fidelity in His life-calling, is at the same time that which specially inspires the sinner with trust in the reality of God's gracious disposition towards him. For it assures him that Christ's view of the character of God was a true one. The outcome of Ritschl's study of the doctrine of atonement, therefore, is that no atonement, in the old sense of the word, is needed. But there is subjective reconciliation, mediated by Christ's life and death, and this is the kernel of the apostolic doctrine. We do not wait to criticise these notions, which seem to us to involve as great a transformation of original Christian doctrine as any which can be blamed on the orthodox theology. There is a peculiar side of Ritschl's teaching here on the mediation of all these blessings to us through the Church, which (not the individual) is the direct object of the divine justification, but it is far from clear how this is to be worked up into the general structure of the system. Probably Ritschl's idea is that the consciousness of this new standing with God through Christ belongs first to the community, and is enjoyed by the individual only as he knows himself to be part of the body.

The only other point in the teaching of Ritschl to which we can here advert is his pronounced anti-mysticism. Ritschl will hear nothing of direct spiritual communion of the soul with God. Pietism in all its forms is an abomination to him. The one way of communion with God is through His historical manifestation in Jesus Christ, and experiences due to a supposed immediate action of the Spirit in the soul can only be regarded as illusion. This is the side of Ritschl's teaching which has been specially taken up and developed by his disciple Herrmann. It will be difficult, we fancy, to persuade most people that this is a nearer approach to the primitive type of Christianity than is found in the ordinary theology.

THE SCHOOL OF RITSCHL

III

THE SCHOOL OF RITSCHL[1]

In a preceding paper on "Albrecht Ritschl" an attempt was made to give some account and estimate of Ritschl himself and his theology. Whatever judgment we may form of the man and his system, the fact is undoubted, as there pointed out, that Ritschl's teaching has had a most powerful effect on multitudes of minds in Germany and other countries, and has given birth to what, by general consent, is recognised as the most influential theological movement of recent times. It touches all spheres and sides of theology, and gives a character to the thinking of many who are not formally ranked as Ritschl's disciples. This of itself is evidence of the forcefulness of the original impulse, while it enables us to estimate better than we can do even from the study of Ritschl himself the innermost meaning and permanent worth of his system. For it is a truism to say that the real spirit of any movement, and the elements of permanent worth

[1] *Expository Times*, March 1895.

which belong to it—as well as the weaknesses and inconsistencies which inhere in it—only become fully manifest in its historical development. In this sense, the study of the school of Ritschl is on a larger scale the study of Ritschl himself.

When we speak of Ritschl as the founder of a school, we mean more than merely that he has exercised a freshening influence on the theology of his time, or even that he is a noteworthy theological thinker and writer. There have been many leaders of thought in theology—Rothe, for example—who yet have not been founders of schools. We use this title to describe one—Schleiermacher, for instance—whose thinking has something principial or germinal in it; who looks at theology from a distinctive and original standpoint; who determines its aims and methods along new lines; and the principle of whose teaching proves its fertility by the abundance and variety of its developments and applications in the different spheres of theology. Applying this test to Ritschl, we cannot deny him the right to be regarded as the creator of a school. Widely divergent in the details of their systems as many of his followers are,—strongly as some of them, while acknowledging their obligations to Ritschl, desire to assert their independence,[1]—they are yet fitly grouped together as sharing in a common impulse, and united by certain fundamental resemblances alike to their master and to one another. Among these generic features which

[1] Kaftan, *e.g.*, in his *Das Wesen*, etc. Preface.

bind together the Ritschlian party are those with which the study of Ritschl has already made us familiar, viz., the strong contrast they all draw between religious and theoretic knowledge; the desire to free theology from all association with, and dependence on, metaphysics; the insisting on the positive revelation in Christ as the one source of true religious knowledge; the central position they all assign to the doctrine of the kingdom of God, and their making of this conception determinative of every other notion in theology—*e.g.*, of that of God, of sin, of the Person of Christ, of redemption; the rigorous exclusion from theology of everything which lies outside the earthly manifestation of Christ (*e.g.*, pre-existence, eschatology); and finally, the distrust of, and antagonism to, everything of the nature of mysticism in religion. Partial exceptions must be made in the case of individuals.

A greater difficulty arises when we attempt to describe the circumference of this school. Certain important names are generally recognised as representing it in theology, as Herrmann of Marburg, Kaftan of Berlin, and (under Ritschlian protest) Bender of Bonn; beyond these we have a class of able writers, more or less representative of the ideas and tendencies of the school in different departments, as Harnack in Church history, Wendt in New Testament theology, Schultz in Old Testament theology and Christology; finally, we have a wider circle of talented and enthusiastic disciples who have done good work

in the magazines of the school,[1] and in separate publications—men like Bornemann, Reischle, Gottschick (editor of *Zeitschrift*), Schrempf (deposed on the *Apostolicum* question), with many others. Reischle, *e.g.*, takes up the mediating rôle—writing on such subjects as, "Can we know the deep things of God?" "A word on the Controversy on Mysticism in Theology," and in an able article in the *Studien und Kritiken* (1891), energetically combating Kaftan's empirical theory of cognition. Bornemann, again, in his *Unterricht,* has attempted a sketch of the theology of the school in systematic form; he also writes the pamphlet *Bitter Truths,* in reply to Egidy's *Earnest Thoughts* (*Ernsten Gedanken*), etc. His *Unterricht* is a curious example of the upside-down kind of treatment to which the working out of Ritschlianism leads in theology, beginning as it does, after some introductory matter, with the kingdom of God in its perfection in glory; then treating of the world in its opposition to this kingdom; then of the kingdom in its present form; then of the Person and work of Christ; then of the knowledge of God; finally, of the Church, and Christian life and duties.

It is of more interest to us to observe how, within this general framework of the Ritschlian party, there has developed itself the most marked individuality in the different members of the school, often leading to entire divergence of view on the most essential points.

[1] Chiefly the *Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche* and *Die Christliche Welt.* *Cf.* above, p. 5.

This may be pointed to as evidence of the healthful vitality of the movement, but it has its side of weakness also, and leaves the impression of a lack of unity and coherence in the Ritschlian theology, arising, it may plausibly be held, from its subjectivism, or weak hold on objective truth, and from the absence of a controlling standard of belief. It would, indeed, be possible, though not perhaps profitable, by playing off the various writers of the school against each other, to make out a far stronger case for the disintegration of Ritschlianism, than they are able to establish, in their favourite line of criticism, for the disintegration of Catholic dogma. Only to indicate what I mean—we have Herrmann definitely separating himself from Ritschl in his theory of knowledge; we have Kaftan decisively repudiating Herrmann, and declaring that with his Kantianism he is back again on the old ground which makes a philosophical view regulative for the treatment of theology;[1] we have Reischle as vigorously demolishing Kaftan's empiricism, and regarding it as the surrender of the possibility of theology;[2] we have Bender thrown over by all parties, while Herrmann retaliates on his own critic by describing Bender as only a "secularised Kaftan";[3] we have another writer of the school (Troeltsch), in a recent number of the *Zeitschrift*, describing Kaftan's apologetic as sceptical in its standpoint, and only avoiding the consequences by falling back on revelation in Christ without either

[1] *Das Wesen*, p. 13. [2] *Stud. und Krit.*, 1891.
[3] *Theol. Lit. Zeit.*, No. 4, 1886.

making good the exclusively supernatural character of this religion as against the claims to revelation of other religions, or showing what supernatural in this connection means.[1] Finally, Ziegler of Strassburg, an independent critic, with much more justice, sees in Bender's theory of religion simply the "unveiled Feuerbachism of the Ritschlian theology." [2]

Approaching the study of this school more seriously, I shall endeavour to bring out as concisely as I can the distinctive positions of some of its leading representatives on the main topics under discussion in their circles. This method of comparison will enable us to see at once the measure of their agreement, and the amount of their divergence, both from each other, and from their common master Ritschl.

We begin naturally with that on which all the members of the school lay great stress—*the theory of knowledge.* The common points here are the assertion of what Kaftan calls the primacy of the practical over the theoretic reason; the denial of the power of the theoretic reason to attain to any knowledge of God, or of supersensible reality; and the consequent drawing of a strong distinction between religious and theoretic knowledge. But within these limits, as already indicated, the widest differences prevail. Herrmann is out and out a Kantian in his view of the Practical Reason, and of an *a priori* moral law, though, in divergence from

[1] *Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche*, 1893, p. 509.
[2] Quoted by Pfleiderer, *Die Ritschl'sche Theol.*, p. 123.

Kant, and really in inner contradiction with him, he places at the centre of all "the feeling of self" (*Selbstgefühl*), to the satisfaction of which both religion and morality are related as means. Kaftan, on the other hand, is as decidedly an empiricist as Herrmann is an idealist—stands on the basis of Locke or Hume, and rejects all *a priori* norms, whether on the theoretic or the practical side. Bender's position I shall refer to later. Yet Kaftan is distinguished from the other members of his school by the earnestness of his attempts to find a means of adjustment between faith and theoretic knowledge which may avoid the appearance of collision between them, and save his faith-theology from the reproach of subjectivism. This is the weakest point in the theology of Ritschl, that by resolving religious knowledge wholly into "value-judgments," and making a complete divorce between religious and theoretic knowledge, he seems to throw doubt on the objective truth of the former. Both in his *Wesen* and his *Wahrheit*,[1] Kaftan deals with this difficulty, and makes liberal concessions in the way of conciliation. He goes so far as to grant the theoretic character of the propositions of faith. "The fact itself," he says, "of the theoretic character of the propositions of faith lies clear before our eyes."[2] He argues strongly that there is only *one* truth, and that all truth is from God; concedes that faith-propositions

[1] [The reference is to Kaftan's *Essence of the Christian Religion*, and *Truth of the Christian Religion*. The latter is translated.]

[2] *Das Wesen*, p. 109 (First Edition).

have their theoretic side, and that "in the treatment of the truth of the Christian religion, it is the theoretic side of these which comes into consideration"; explains that "truth" in this connection means simply what it does in other cases, not subjective truth, but "objective"—"the agreement of the proposition with the real state of the case," which is unaffected by our thoughts and judgments upon it, etc.[1] In a more recent article in the *Zeitschrift*, he even proposes to abandon the expression "judgments of value" altogether, as liable to misapprehension. "I have," he says, "in this attempt to describe the knowledge of faith according to its kind and manner of origin, avoided the expression *Werthurtheile*, though I have earlier so characterised the propositions of faith. They are theoretic judgments, which are grounded upon a judgment of worth, which therefore cannot be appropriated without entering into this judgment of worth which lies at their foundation."[2] But this only raises the new question—What is meant by a "theoretic judgment" which rests exclusively on a judgment of worth?

The truth is, that while Kaftan, in the above expressions, seems to be vindicating an objective character for his propositions of faith, he never really gets—and from his empirical basis cannot get—beyond subjective postulates and representations. What is more to our purpose at the present stage—these views with which

[1] *Die Wahrheit*, pp. 1-7.
[2] *Zeit. für T. u. K.*, 1891, p. 501.

he sets out, of the unity of truth, of the theoretic and objective character of our faith-knowledge, are completely left behind in the subsequent discussions. There we have the old dualism brought back in the most pronounced form. In the analysis of knowledge in the *Wahrheit, e.g.*, we have a distinction drawn between Opinion, Faith, and Knowledge. "An opinion," we are told, "can be true, and religious faith is always regarded as true, by him who adheres to it. But neither in the one case nor in the other do we speak of such a thing as knowledge. . . . Faith lies in quite a different sphere from both knowledge and opinion. . . . In contradistinction to faith and opinion, knowledge signifies that we are convinced of the state of things in a manner which admits of no doubt."[1] The drift of this, confirmed by the context, is, that knowledge is excluded from faith; and since theology consists only of faith-propositions, it cannot give knowledge. The amazing thing is that, after all, it is held by Kaftan to be the direct function of faith to give us knowledge—nay, the highest knowledge—on the supreme questions of existence; and it is claimed that it is the *sole* source of knowledge on these questions. "Christian faith," we are told, "asserts that it is the true knowledge of the First Cause and of the final purpose of all things, . . . it offers just what philosophy has sought as the highest knowledge, or as the solution of the enigma of the world. . . . The task is no other than that of proving that the knowledge supplied by Christi-

[1] *Die Wahrheit*, E. T., ii. p. 14.

anity as to the First Cause and final purpose of all things is true."[1] I think that any one who goes carefully through Kaftan's books will be compelled to come to the conclusion that underneath an appearance of great clearness and precision of style, there exists about as confusing and incoherent a system of positive thought as could well be presented. He will be struck also by the fact that in neither of his works—while speaking constantly of faith—does Kaftan ever give a proper definition of faith, and such descriptions as he does give have generally reference to it as a mode of apprehension.

Connected with this theory of knowledge in the school of Ritschl, considerable importance attaches to the *theory of religion* of the members of the school. In one negative respect the Ritschlians all agree, viz., in denying to the soul any essential or immediate conscious relation to God. The first thing is not the consciousness of dependence on God, or of relation to Him, but some impulse or want of the individual life—in Ritschl and Herrmann, the feeling of personality, and the desire for freedom from the limitations of nature, and for dominion over the world; in Kaftan, the wish for life, or blessedness. God is then postulated as the means by which this end is to be brought about. Here again Kaftan severs himself from the others, and formulates a theory in keeping with his empirical basis. Briefly stated, it is this: Man finds in himself a desire for happiness, which with Kaftan is a synonym for

[1] *Die Wahrheit*, E. T., i. pp. 4, 5.

"life." But experience shows that this longing for blessedness is not satisfied by anything in this world. The good which satisfies it must therefore be a supramundane, and furthermore an infinite, good. In this infinity of "the claim upon life," inseparable from our nature, and which the world is not able to satisfy, lies, according to Kaftan, the root-motive of religion. "Generally, the claim on life," he says, "lies at the foundation of religion. That this claim is not satisfied in the world, and further through the world, is the common motive of all religions."[1] It would be a pertinent criticism on this theory to ask, But whence this claim on life? Why this striving after an infinite and supramundane good? What view of man's nature is implied in the possibility of such strivings? And how far does the mere existence of such a wish or claim guarantee the existence of an object or good fitted to satisfy the claim? These are questions which Kaftan does not answer, but which a true theory of religion should answer.

We may see next how Kaftan connects this theory of religion with Christianity, and with the proof of its truth. It has been observed by Köstlin that Ritschl himself never attempted any definite answer to the question of apologetics—How do we know that in Christianity we have the truth? Ritschl certainly hints at the matter when he says in his large work, "Its representation in theology will, therefore, come to a conclusion in the proof that the Christian ideal of

[1] *Das Wesen*, p. 67; *cf.* p. 60.

life, and no other, satisfies the claims of the human spirit to a knowledge of things generally."[1] It is along this line—the agreement of Christianity with our postulates of what is necessary to the realisation of the idea of the supreme good—that Kaftan seeks the proof of the truth of Christianity. First, he sketches the idea of the supreme good, as that is deducible from the claim on life, and the facts of experience and history. History shows that the supreme good must be a moral one; experience also demonstrates that it must be a supramundane one. Its true, rational, universally valid idea, in short, is that of just such a kingdom of God as we have made known to us in Christianity. This kingdom is therefore a postulate of reason—*if* the supreme good is to be realised. It is a further postulate of reason that it must be made known to us in history by divine revelation. The Christian revelation, as an historical fact, is then compared with this preconstructed idea, and these assumed postulates, and is found of course to agree with them. In this agreement lies the proof of its truth. Only when we speak of Christianity in this connection, we have to remember that it is just so much of Christianity as it suits the requirements of Kaftan's theory to admit. It seems to follow that, rightly understood, what is called faith in Christianity is much more faith in Kaftan's peculiar hypothesis about religion. Christianity, that is, does not come to us with any self-certifying power. First, we have to reach this idea of the supreme good,

[1] *Recht. und Ver.*, iii. p. 25 (Third Edition, E. T., p. 25).

and of the kingdom of God as corresponding with it, by what Kaftan himself calls the speculative method. Then we prove Christianity to be true by its agreement with this idea. I fear if the demonstration is made to hinge on the success of this attempt, it will be a long time before the claims of Christianity meet with general recognition. Here we observe a distinct superiority in the method of Herrmann over that of Kaftan. Herrmann, too, has his theory of religion, and his manner of applying it to the judgment of Christianity is not essentially different from Kaftan's. But after his first work, Herrmann leaves his theory of religion very much behind him, and goes out on a totally different line of proof. The great—almost the sole—idea in his later writings is the irresistible impression (*Eindruck*) which Christ makes on the soul historically confronted with Him, compelling the acknowledgment that God is with Him, and is gracious. This is a true thought, and Herrmann has done service in ringing the changes on it as incessantly as he has done. After all, however, it leaves us very much in the vague as to the nature of this "Power over all things" which Christ is alleged to reveal. Herrmann thinks that by this method he has shaken himself clear of all dependence on philosophical assumptions, but he only accomplishes this by reducing the impression we receive from Christ to something so indefinite and formless that no proper theology can be deduced from it.

From these fundamental positions, it will be possible

to sketch rapidly the attitude taken up by the followers of Ritschl to some of the special doctrines in theology. The controlling conception with the whole school is, as already stated, the idea of the kingdom of God.[1] But then this idea, as we have had occasion to see, is itself not very definitely conceived. With Ritschl himself it is exclusively—with Herrmann predominatingly—a kingdom in this world; with Kaftan and other prominent Ritschlians, including Weiss (Ritschl's own son-in-law), it is wholly an eschatological conception. With Kaftan the kingdom of righteousness on earth is but a moral preparation for the true kingdom of God, which, in accordance with his fundamental positions, he defines as super-terrestrial and future. A semi-mystical element, therefore, enters into Kaftan's conception of Christianity which is foreign to most writers of the school. The centre of gravity in the Christian system is not with him, as with Herrmann, the historical Christ, but, on the contrary, the glorified Christ, and the life of the Christian is a life hid with Christ in God. Herrmann's attitude is the very opposite of this. The only *Verkehr*, or communion, of the Christian with God he will recognise is that meditated by the historical life of Jesus; everything that savours of mystical converse or communion of God with the soul, through a direct and present communication of Himself by His Spirit, he energetically repudiates. By this idea of the kingdom of God, then, variously as it may be conceived by the different writers, every

[1] But see additional note on Kaftan's *Dogmatik*.

other doctrine of the Christian system is to be measured. The central point here again is the Christology. That all the members of this school reject the orthodox Christology—regard it, with Herrmann, Kaftan, Harnack, as a result of the fusion of Christian ideas with Greek, and particularly with Alexandrian metaphysics —is well known. But it is not so clear what they propose to put in its stead. It is easy to say—Let us content ourselves with the certainty that in some way, borne in upon us as an irresistible conviction, God was in Christ—that we can therefore with justice attach to Him the predicate of Godhead,—but the mind cannot permanently maintain itself in this vague, unquestioning condition. How should it, indeed, be possible for a speculative faculty such as both Herrmann and Kaftan assume, which goes on building up theories of the world, postulating God to reconcile moral antinomies, and defining the nature of the true good,—how should it be possible for such a faculty not to ask itself the question, What is the postulate needful to explain this extraordinary appearance which we have in Christ? Why must the thinking mind postulate God for the explanation of the world, and be debarred from postulating something transcendental in explanation of the Person of Christ? Now the interesting fact is that the moment the Ritschlians do take up this task of trying to explain Christ to their own minds, they are driven back on transcendental explanations. There is a striking passage in the *first* edition of Herrmann's *Verkehr*, in which he says that if the Christian will follow out

the question of the union of the divine and human natures in Christ, "the Christological decisions of the ancient Church still always mark out the limits within which such attempts must move."[1] He expresses himself in a yet stronger way on the necessity of recognising a super-earthly basis for the Godhead of Christ in his recent pamphlet on the *Apostolicum* controversy. Kaftan utters himself hardly less distinctly. This movement, as I have observed elsewhere, can scarcely fail to go further, and work itself into clearer relations with existing Christian dogma.

To discuss the views of the Ritschlian writers on the doctrines of sin, of reconciliation, of the future life, would carry me beyond the limits of the present paper. It is perhaps the less necessary to go into this region, that the disciples add little that is distinctive to the general features of the Ritschlian theology. Not one of these writers holds an atonement in the objective sense; but Christ's work is conceived of as giving us the assurance of God's forgiving grace. Without entering further into this subject, I shall conclude with a very few words on the views of perhaps the least known of all these theologians—Bender of Bonn. Bender is the *enfant terrible* of the Ritschlian party, but with all their repudiation of him, I cannot but think that he expresses the real tendency and essence of the theology better than many of its more reputable representatives. He at least starts from orthodox

[1] P. 46 (quoted above, p. 27). *Cf.* his *Die Religion*, etc. pp. 438-9.

Ritschlian ground in affirming that religion is simply a means through which man seeks freedom from the limitations and hindrances of his existence, and the furtherance of his lower and higher life-aims. But Bender makes no disguise of what this means for him. "Not the question as to God," he tells us boldly, "but the question as to man, is the central question of religion. The idea of God is in the first instance only the imaginary line (*Hilfslinie*) which man draws in order to make his existence in the world comprehensible. The elevation of the mind to the Godhead in worship is only a means of help, by which man, in the battle of his existence, seeks to appropriate super-terrestrial powers to himself, in order to maintain in their integrity his selfish or disinterested, his material or ideal, interests, especially when his own powers are exhausted."[1] Man, therefore, is the centre, not God. "Every religious view of the world," he says, "is anthropocentric."[2] Ritschl had declared that what we affirm of God in our Christian view of the world is a product of our phantasy (*unserer Einbildungskraft*). Bender takes this view of the matter quite in earnest. "The idea of God," he says, "is a thought-image of our phantasy more than of our understanding."[3] He tells us how it originates. It frames itself "from the need of so thinking of the world-development that the specifically human ideal of a perfectly blessed life is attainable in spite of apparent contradictions."[4] The

[1] *Das Wesen der Religion*, p. 22.
[2] P. 85.
[3] P. 105.
[4] P. 89.

religious cultus is explained as a further means to the self-maintenance of man and his interests in the world. The idea of revelation obtains in all religions, and we get a psychological explanation of it, not unlike Pfleiderer's. The outcome is—that in religion we move in a perfectly ideal world. Yet, and this is the remarkable thing—Bender holds also that we do not move in a world of *mere* ideals. He thinks the fact that we discern a moral progress in the world, and that in the religious development we find a gradual moving upwards to the perfected religious and moral ideal in Christ, with His doctrine of the kingdom of God, of forgiveness of sins, and of a providential government of the world, leaves open the hypothesis—for it really comes to no more than this—that there truly is a Power ruling us and the whole world, with whom we dare find the guarantees of the realisations of our life-ideals, and who can accordingly be the object of our faith and worship.[1] Christianity, at the same time, is accepted by Bender only in a very expurgated form. Here Ritschlianism and Rationalism are in perfect accord. The supernatural in every form is denied. The incarnation, the miracles, the very sinlessness of Christ are set aside. Yet just as in Pfleiderer, a fine symbolism is found in all the Christian doctrines, and these are to be retained in the cultus, if not in the judgment of reason. If, *e.g.*, "the Church honours Christ as the overcomer of sin and evil, while it also in His individual life dramatically

[1] *Das Wesen der Religion*, p. 241, etc.

represents in the resurrection and ascension the process of the glorification and deification of human life, there is nothing," he says, "to be objected to this, if only two things are remembered"[1]—then follows the explication. The Ritschlian critics are right when they say that the first and second parts of Bender's system do not hold together, and that what we really have is only a subjective idealism. What they do *not* show so clearly is, how, starting from nearly identical premisses, they can logically avoid similar conclusions.

Additional Notes

1. *Ecke on the School of Ritschl.*—In 1897 appeared an admirable work by Gustav Ecke, of Bremen, entitled *Die theologische Schule Albrecht Ritschls,* with which the foregoing sketch, and that in the writer's *Ritschlian Theology*, may usefully be compared. The book gives in the first place a characterisation and criticism of Ritschl's own theology—friendly, especially on the point of the severance of theology from philosophy, but in many of its results not very different from those indicated above. It traces the rise of Ritschl's school, and lays stress on the praiseworthy sides of its theology. It then takes up the Christian doctrines in detail, chiefly from the point of view of showing an increasing approximation in members of the school to "the uncurtailed Biblical-Reformed-Confession." The only remark that needs to be made in criticism is

[1] P. 295.

that Ecke's irenical motive leads him sometimes to press too far expressions in his authors that look like approach to Church doctrine,—*e.g.*, on the subject of the vicarious sufferings of Christ,—and to make too little of the deeper differences of meaning which their language often covers. He has, nevertheless, to admit great shortcomings and divergences in Ritschlian teachings. Ecke's own sympathies are with a type of doctrine akin to Kähler's, of Halle; and from this standpoint he upholds, as against Ritschl and such of his followers as agree with him, the rights of pietism, the pre-existence and full divinity of Christ, His expiatory death, etc. His fragmentary method of dealing with the views of the different writers has the disadvantage of preventing the exhibition of the opinions of any of them as a whole. Allusions to Ecke's book are found in papers Nos. IV. and V. below.

2. *Kaftan's Dogmatik.*—Since the above Essay was written Kaftan has published a *Dogmatik* (1897), which puts us in possession of his full views on the theological system. It does not, however, add much to the knowledge gained from his previous works. In respect of form, the most striking thing to be noted, perhaps, is, that Kaftan makes almost no use in his scheme of doctrine of the category of the kingdom of God, but follows practically the old divisions: the doctrines of God, of the world, of man and sin, of the Person and work of Christ, etc. His treatment shows a constant desire to do justice to the evangelical elements in the Christian faith, and is far more posi-

tive in character than that of many of the school. In many respects, however, it lacks coherence, and compels dissent. Sin is viewed as belonging to man's natural constitution (guilt, on the other hand, arises with knowledge); the "Godhead" of Jesus is maintained, even to the point of affirming an eternal mode of being (p. 437), but in reality we seem to get no higher than a perfect revelation of God in a human person (p. 419); Christ's resurrection and exaltation are defended; strong language is used on the vicarious character of Christ's sufferings and the redemptive value of His death, but the sense in which these expressions are used is entirely different from that of the Church theory. The death of Jesus is explained as the necessary result of His fidelity in his vocation, and so as the necessary means for the realisation of the divine aim of salvation (p. 543; *cf.* pp. 514-18). The Pauline statement that Christ bore the curse of the law, is interpreted as applicable only to Jews (pp. 461-2). But in a sense it is allowed that Christ redeems us all from the curse by the fact of His dying for us, since His vocation in realising the counsel of the divine pity could not otherwise he fulfilled (pp. 516-17). The whole treatment is seriously vitiated by the defects in Kaftan's fundamental presuppositions.

RITSCHL—AND AFTER

IV

RITSCHL—AND AFTER[1]

THE Ritschlian movement has by this time got a long way beyond Ritschl. The Master is credited with the saying that after his death his followers would divide into two camps, and neither, he added in his incisive fashion, would be right. His prophecy has been fulfilled. The opposing tendencies which it was evident the movement held within it from the first, have increasingly diverged; new influences have coalesced with the primary one; and while one section of the school has developed in a constantly more positive direction, another has sunk back into the general sea of historical and critical rationalism. This is apt to give rise to an illusion in contemplating the movement, from the effects of which Mr Garvie,

[1] *The Ritschlian Theology; Critical and Constructive.* An Exposition and an Estimate, by Alfred E. Garvie, M.A. (Oxon.), B.D. (Glas.) [now D.D.]. Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1899. [*British Weekly*, 23rd Nov. 1899.—Mr Garvie has replied to some points in the above criticism in an appendix to his Second Edition. His remarks do not seem to call for special comment beyond the few notes in next article, No. V.]

in this able volume, and even Ecke, in the instructive work to which Mr Garvie owns his indebtedness, are not completely free. The temptation is natural to eke out the deficiencies of Ritschl by what is found in Herrmann, or Kaftan, or Harnack, or, conversely, to correct aberrations in these writers by the more positive elements in Ritschl—the resultant impression rather resembling a "composite photograph" of the school than yielding the well-defined image of an individual system.

It would be unfair, however, to judge of Mr Garvie's full and thoughtful book by what really lies outside his aim. His frankly-stated object is not to expound systematically the teaching of Ritschl and his school, but to concentrate attention on its distinctive principles, first in its *critical*, then in its *constructive* aspect. Besides Ritschl himself, the only writers that come much into view are the three above named. Let it be said at once that nothing could be more painstaking, generous, or impartial—with perhaps the exception of the uncalled-for severity of the strictures on Dr Denney—than the author's general treatment of his subject. He has framed his opinions as the result of first-hand study of the Ritschlian literature; has weighed most that others have said of it; and with care has summed up his conclusions in a singularly dispassionate manner, certainly not sparing criticism where he thinks it needed, but losing no opportunity of speaking good of the system he is interpreting. With the aid of his book, and of the translation

of Ritschl's own great work on *Justification and Reconciliation* [now published], the English reader should have little difficulty in following the trend of a theology which has evoked keener discussion in the land of its birth than any other of our day. If, notwithstanding, we have a few points of disagreement with the author, he will understand it is from no lack of appreciation of the solid service he has done.

Mr Garvie, in the course of his work, repeatedly lays claim to special "sympathy" in his treatment of a theology which, he thinks, has hitherto suffered somewhat from the unfortunate manner in which it has been brought before the public. Faults have been thrust into the foreground; excellences have been repressed. The "generosity and sympathy" of Mr Garvie's exposition all will recognise, though it does not, as already hinted, avail to save the Ritschlian theology from surprisingly severe handling. Sympathy, however, is a relative term. It was, as Mr Garvie does not conceal, lack of sympathy which was Ritschl's own worst defect. "He showed no understanding of, and no sympathy with, types of piety other than his own"[1]—"His individuality asserts itself in violent antagonisms and exaggerated antitheses"[2]—are specimens of many confessions. It might be pleaded, too, that there has been much more appreciation of the undeniably good side of Ritschl's theology than Mr Garvie allows for. The present writer may be pardoned for recalling that

[1] P. 21. [2] Contents, chap. xii.

well-nigh the first words he ever wrote on Ritschlianism were a recognition of its service in laying stress on the need and reality of positive revelation. "The general position of this school," he said, "may be fairly summed up by saying that God can only be truly known to us by personal, positive revelation, in which He actually enters into historical relations with mankind; and that this revelation has been given in the Person of His Son Jesus Christ. Through this revelation alone, but in it perfectly, we have the true knowledge of God's character, of His world-aim in the establishing of a kingdom of God on earth, and of His gracious will of forgiveness and love." [1] A subsequent paper was devoted primarily to showing wherein the good of Ritschlianism lay, and few of the merits Mr Garvie has brought forward were there overlooked. There has been no disposition to minimise the ability and influence of Ritschl, or to deny the healthful impulse he has given in nearly all the departments of theology. In some spheres of his work we regard him as *facile princeps* in his generation. But when respect is had to the system as a whole—to its exclusive claims, its ruling ideas, its extraordinary shortcomings as a theology, which Mr Garvie assuredly does not minimise, its overbearing aggressiveness (since much softened) in its assaults on the ordinary theology of the creeds — sympathy may require to give way to the sense of its very serious defects, and it may become a duty to speak very

[1] *Christian View of God and the World*, p. 64.

plainly respecting them. We may admire the build of a stately craft, praise its artistic appointments, its brave flags, its gallant crew; but if it has to be admitted that its hull is rent, its chart wrongly drawn, its steering-gear disordered, its compass untrue, its engines and pumps ineffective, all the sympathy in the world will not keep it afloat, or entitle it to be spoken of as seaworthy.

We do not for a moment mean that Mr Garvie would accept the foregoing as a correct description of the theology he expounds; but we think, if we cared to press the matter, we could prove the justice of it to the hilt from the extremely damaging admissions and criticisms of his own pages—criticisms which apply to the foundations of the Ritschlian system, and leave not a single article of it untouched. Nor are we able to concede that the apologies set up for these defects are always of the most cogent character. It is hardly a strong defence, *e.g.*, after knocking the bottom out of Ritschl's metaphysics, to plead that he was really "incapable of philosophical thinking,"[1] that his "intention" was good, that what he was opposing was not "philosophy as it might be, but philosophy as it was."[2] It is true enough to say that Ritschl's rejection of metaphysics in theology, like his rejection of speculative theism, of ecclesiastical dogma, of religious mysticism, was in a positive religious interest. But this is only a half-truth. There is another half. Professor Kähler, of Halle,

[1] P. 45. [2] P. 77.

said to the writer on one occasion, "I agree with Ritschl that metaphysics should be excluded from theology, but then under the name of metaphysics he gets rid of vital Christian doctrines." Then, when Mr Garvie says that Ritschl's argument deserves "cordial sympathy" as a protest against any subordination of Christian truth to speculative thought of the kind which denies freedom, excludes miracle, and ignores mystery, it cannot be supposed that he means that this is an attitude *peculiar* to Ritschlianism, especially when it is acknowledged that Ritschl himself has fallen into bondage to a metaphysic of a very obnoxious kind.

It needs, in truth, some effort to maintain at the necessary pitch one's "sympathy" with a system in which (to quote only one sentence), "God is, so to speak, lost in His kingdom, Christ in His vocation, the soul in its activities";[1] but, without attempting to follow Mr Garvie into the details of his criticism, a glance may be given at one or two of the points on which he thinks Ritschl has been misapprehended. One is the difficult subject of the "value-judgments." The very range and complexity of discussion on this subject in the school, shows that the matter is not so simple as Mr Garvie supposes. But granting him his own form of it, viz., that it "is but a new way of putting the truth, that if a man does the will he will know whether the doctrine be of God or not, that the pure in heart shall see God, that what is spiritual is

[1] P. 62.

spiritually discerned"[1]—in other words, that knowledge of spiritual truth is morally and spiritually conditioned, we would ask, does Mr Garvie know of any church or religious teacher that would dream of denying the fact? Would Bernard, or Calvin, or Edwards, or Chalmers, have denied it? What then is there in it peculiar to Ritschlianism? The representation is sometimes made as if "faith" outside of Ritschlian theology was conceived of as at least primarily an intellectual process. The truth is that faith, in the sense of the ordinary evangelical doctrine, has depths of "value-judging" in it that the plumb of Ritschlianism is totally incapable of sounding. It is a fruit of regeneration; a work of God's own Holy Spirit in the soul; it springs from a heart broken in penitence, penetrated with the sense of the absolute *un*worth of sin, and admitted to some vision of the absolute worth of the divine holiness, and perception of the mercy of God in Christ—it is conditioned by "value-judging" through and through. Ritschl never went so deep as this; could not in the nature of the case do it; himself lacked, as our author acknowledges, "an understanding for the deepest Christian experience of abounding sin and superabounding grace."[2]

Mr Garvie thinks Ritschl has been misapprehended on the subject of the mystical relation of the soul to God, though it costs him long and recondite argument to try to make out his point, and he ends by granting that Ritschl "laid such emphasis on 'the active

[1] P. 189. [2] P. 315.

functions of the human spirit' as to appear practically to exclude the mystical element, the presence and the power of the spirit of God, which eludes psychological analysis." "The truth is," he says, "that Ritschl and his school are contending for *what is recognised practically in all the Christian Churches,* the dependence of Christianity on the historical revelation of God in Christ, as recorded in the New Testament."[1] But if this is recognised—and who can doubt it?—in all the Churches, where again is the merit of Ritschlianism in connection with it? Except to obscure it. "The truth is" that Ritschl, as one will come to see who grasps the true inwardness of his rejection of the *unio mystica,* and the reason for this in his doctrine of the soul, means a great deal more. We quote Mr Garvie's summary of the doctrine of the soul, and it will be seen of itself how much mysticism is compatible with it. "In his denial of the metaphysical existence of the soul, and his restriction of personal life to the spiritual activities, he implicitly contradicts the unity and identity of the 'self,' the possibility of character, the certainty of immortality."[2] This reacts on the idea of revelation—even in Christ.

On miracle, Mr Garvie brings forward a passage from Ecke from (unpublished) lectures of Ritschl which takes stronger ground on the resurrection than anything in his published works.[3] It fails, however,

[1] P. 149. Italics are ours.

[2] Contents of chap. v., sect. iii. A statement follows of Ritschl's "intention" to affirm as above.

[3] P. 225.

to remove the settled ambiguity which rests upon his utterances in the latter; and the views expressed on the position of the school generally are, so far as our reading goes, much too optimistic. The Eisenach Conference, which drew from Loofs his believing pamphlet on *The Resurrection Narratives,* is proof on that point. But there is, admittedly, a growing positive wing.

The least convincing part of Mr Garvie's book is, to our mind, that which deals with the Ritschlian treatment of the "Godhead" of Christ. No argument can get over the fact that in this theology—certainly in Ritschl's own—this predicate is an expression of the "value" placed on Christ by religious emotion rather than a declaration of His inherent and essential dignity. As Mr Garvie truly tells us, what Ritschl seeks to substitute for the doctrine of the two natures in the Person of Christ "is an original direction of the will of Christ, in virtue of which God's final purpose was constantly and completely accepted by Him as His self-end."[1] Exactly; but this is not "Godhead," and faith, using that term to express "religious value," is practising an illusion on itself, and transcending fact. This is an example of what we think Ritschl really means by "value-judgments," of which other illustrations are found in Mr Garvie's volume in the treatment of the doctrines of guilt and punishment, and of justification. "A man conscious of guilt regards the evils that befall him as punishments. Here, then, *we*

[1] P. 284.

are concerned with a subjective representation, not an objective reality."[1] "Men as in time are conscious of a change in their relation to God. Before, they had feared God's displeasure; now, they enjoy His favour. *But this is only a subjective impression* involved in man's temporal existence."[2] It is wholly a straining to try to make out that Ritschl believed in any sense in a real pre-existence of Christ.[3] Even Herrmann's words in an early work—which express rather the necessity of faith giving this shape to its impression of the mystery of Christ's Person than say anything of the actual fact—seem left behind in his later views. It was at Eisenach he bade men turn from questions of pre-existence with hearts "cold as ice."

There is much else that might be said on this interesting book, but the above will probably suffice. Had Mr Garvie treated his subject from the synthetic point of view, we think his sense of the inadequacy of Ritschlianism as a theology would be even greater than it is. The students at Mansfield College were privileged in having these educative lectures delivered to them, and Ritschlian literature is permanently enriched by their publication in this revised and enlarged form.

[1] P. 310. Italics ours. *Cf.* below, p. 109.
[2] P. 377; *cf.* p. 308.
[3] P. 292.

PROFESSOR SWING ON RITSCHL AND HIS CRITICS

V

PROFESSOR SWING ON RITSCHL AND HIS CRITICS [1]

ATTENTION was called in the April number of *The Presbyterian and Reformed Review* (1902) to the volume of Prof. Swing, of Oberlin, on *The Theology of Albrecht Ritschl*,[2] in an able and temperate notice by Dr C. W. Hodge, jr. It is not the purpose of this article to retraverse the ground gone over in that critique. The present writer, however, may be excused for taking a special interest in the volume in question, as in its pages he finds himself singled out as a chief offender in "misleading" the public in regard to the real nature of Ritschl's teaching. The burden of responsibility laid upon him is truly heavy. "Prof. Orr," says the author, "has done more than any other critic to discredit Ritschl in the estimation of the English public. He has gone through the subject

[1] *Princeton Theological Review*, January 1903.

[2] *The Theology of Albrecht Ritschl*, by Albert Temple Swing, A.M., Professor of Church History in Oberlin Theological Seminary. Longmans, Green & Co., 1901.

with such thoroughness and evident sincerity (it is gratifying to have even this much acknowledged) that his fundamental misunderstanding of Ritschl's views has been accepted as historical truth." [1] Again, "The fact is, that Prof. Orr's persistent attempts to explain away everything objectively real from the theology of Ritschl vitiate his whole work, and render him, in spite of his scholarly accomplishments, a misleading guide to the understanding of the Ritschlian theology." [2] In the index, under Prof. Orr's name, we have "A misleading guide." In a review in an influential American paper of the writer's last book on *The Progress of Dogma*, the same charge recurs. "Prof. Orr," it is said, "is chiefly responsible for the misunderstanding of Ritschl in England and America, and in this book he continues his inability to appreciate the Ritschlian point of view." [3] The curious fact is that, while certain positions of Prof. Harnack are adversely criticised, there is scarcely an allusion to Ritschl in this last-named work except in way of approval. These are serious charges, and if they are unfounded deserve to be refuted. Still, the personal aspect of the matter does not greatly concern the writer; and were it not that Prof. Swing's assertions raise the larger question of what really ought to be thought of the theology of Ritschl, the readers of this *Review*

[1] P. 4.

[2] P. 128. Profs. Denney and Wenley are included in the same condemnation.

[3] *The Independent*, 21st August.

would certainly not be troubled with any fresh comment on the subject.

To obviate misunderstanding, let it be said at once that no disrespect is intended to Prof. Swing's treatment of the Ritschlian theology in his book. On the contrary, it is a pleasure to acknowledge that he has produced an interesting little monograph on his subject, which, though, as we venture to think, extravagantly rose-coloured in its estimate of Ritschl, will have its value for every student of that author, whether he agrees with its conclusions or not. Special thanks are due to Alice Mead Swing for the excellent translation of Ritschl's *Unterricht* incorporated in the volume. Such a translation was distinctly needed, and on the whole this is as good as could be desired. The volume is worth possessing for it alone. Neither is complaint made of the criticism in itself. Prof. Swing is perfectly within his rights in making what criticisms he thinks justified; and if the present writer was convinced that he had in any material respect misrepresented Ritschl, he hopes he would have the grace frankly to acknowledge his error. As the case stands, however, he cannot feel that he is called upon for any such retractation. His judgments on Ritschlianism were not formed without long and painstaking study, and renewed examination has only had the effect of causing him to adhere to them more firmly. This by no means implies that he has no perception of the distinctive merits of the Ritschlian movement, or appreciation of the healthy impulses that

have proceeded from it. Of these, ample and cordial acknowledgment has repeatedly been made. The sole question relates to the adequacy of the basis of the Ritschlian theology, and the justice of its interpretations of the evangelical doctrines. And on these points the writer's judgment is unaltered. For the purposes of the Evangelical Church he does not hesitate to say that Ritschl's theology is *impossible.* This is even more the case with Ritschl's own teaching (to which Prof. Swing confines himself) than with that of some of his followers, who have in many ways modified his positions, or perhaps never accepted them.

Only one other preliminary observation is necessary. Prof. Swing's attitude to Ritschl's theology is, it must be confessed, peculiar. He constitutes himself an expounder, not a critic, of the system; but the exposition is accompanied with almost unvarying approval. He remarks, "We need not defend all that Ritschl said";[1] but by no chance at any point does a sign of dissent escape him. In this entire homologation of Ritschl's peculiar teaching, Prof. Swing stands nearly alone. Every one familiar with the literature is aware that even the most sympathetic critics have conceded large hiatuses, obscurities, inconsistencies, indefensibilities, in Ritschl's thinking.[2] None of them would give Ritschl the same unqualified

[1] P. 6.

[2] Ritschl's followers, as Prof. Swing himself says, have "had less to say publicly in direct praise of his theology, than they have in the way of modifying his individual statements" (p. 1).

certificate which Prof. Swing here issues. This applies to many of the exceptions taken to Ritschl by the critics whose remarks alone Prof. Swing notices. In his pages all critics are presumed to be, from one side or another, *hostile* to Ritschl. It should in fairness have been indicated that in many cases the same criticisms proceed also from those who can only be ranked as Ritschl's friends. Prof. Swing's method of dealing with the objectors—"simply placing their statements," as he says, "about Ritschl side by side with Ritschl's own words, in a sort of literary pillory"[1] —is a delightfully simple, but, as pointed out by the reviewer in April, in Ritschl's case an eminently unsatisfactory one. Ritschl is of all writers the last to whom it is adapted. His statements are often tantalisingly obscure; are far from being always coherent; often are evangelical in sound when deeper consideration shows that, in the context of his system, they import something very different. Illustrations will immediately be given of the caution needed in this "pillory" process.

It may be well to begin by looking at the specific charges of misunderstanding advanced by Prof. Swing, and testing his accuracy in regard to these. The following are the instances in which the present writer is put in the "literary pillory."

1. As respects the "fundamental misunderstanding," this is said to be specially seen "in his (Prof. Orr's) continually representing Ritschl as subjective in his

[1] P. 5.

theory of knowledge and judgments of worth, and in his asserting that Ritschl does not hold to the objective reality of sin, and therefore of redemption, and that with Ritschl the very resurrection of Christ is discredited.[1]

So far as this relates to the theory of knowledge and judgments of worth, it is considered farther on. Other points fall under the remaining heads.

2. On the resurrection of Christ (*cf.* the closing sentence in above): "And yet Prof. Orr, in *The Christian View of God and the World*" (p. 454), "says that he cannot but regard the Ritschlian position 'as the virtual surrender of faith in Christ's resurrection'"![2]

The note is one of astonishment that such a thing as doubt of Christ's resurrection should even be hinted at in Ritschlianism. The question is discussed below. Meanwhile it should be noticed that the quotation given has reference more immediately to the views of leading Ritschlian writers, whose words, as cited, amply justify the statement made.

3. On sin: "And yet Prof. Orr says that with Ritschl 'sin is only a subjective judgment which the sinner passes on himself, to which nothing actual corresponds.'" In opposition, Ritschl is declared to have emphasised "in a thoroughly fundamental way the fact of sin, of guilt, and of participation in a kingdom of sin." "And this," he says, "I wish to make very clear, for the reason that several critics, and Prof. Orr in particular, have shown here an

[1] P. 4. [2] P. 111.

incredulity that would itself be incredible if we did not have so many illustrations of it."[1]

Prof. Orr never made any such statement as that attributed to him. He did not say (as quoted) that in Ritschl's view "sin" is "a subjective judgment" of the sinner, but that "guilt" is—a very different thing (see next paragraph). To this judgment, for reasons to be given, he adheres.

4. "Yet, notwithstanding all these clear and positive statements, Prof. Orr actually declares (*The Christian View of God*, etc., p. 178[9], and not by any means set right in his later book, *The Ritschlian Theology*, pp. 146, 269f.) that the effect of Ritschl's theology, along with others, is 'to weaken, if not actually to destroy, the idea of guilt'; that Ritschl regards all sin 'as arising so much from ignorance as to be without real guilt in the eyes of God'; and that 'redemption is not removal of guilt, but of consciousness of guilt'; and 'instead of guilt being regarded as something objectively real, which God as well as man is bound to take account of, it comes to be viewed as something clinging to the subjective consciousness—a subjective judgment which the sinner passes on himself, to which nothing actual corresponds.'"[2]

These are the typical examples of misunderstanding which it is proposed to subject to some examination, less, as already said, for the purpose of self-vindication than as a means of bringing out what the theology of Ritschl really is.

[1] Pp. 120-1, [2] P. 127.

1. It will be convenient to begin with the alleged misrepresentation as to Ritschlian views on the resurrection of Christ. It is gratifying to find an initial point of agreement with Prof. Swing in the importance he evidently attaches to this great Gospel affirmation. This constitutes it a good test of the real trend of Ritschlian teaching. And *our* surprise is that Prof. Swing should question the accuracy of the statement made as to the general attitude of Ritschlian theologians to this cardinal article of faith. There is, indeed, a positive wing of the school, represented, *e.g.*, by Kaftan and Loofs, and, at a greater remove from Ritschl, by Häring, which does give unequivocal expression to its faith in the resurrection. But the greater number who can be classed as Ritschlians either (1) reject the bodily resurrection (the physical miracle), while holding as "a thought of faith" that Christ still lives and rules; or (2) admit supernatural "appearances" of Christ to the disciples, though not a bodily rising; while (3) practically all hold that the historical question is one indifferent to faith. It is difficult to see how they could do otherwise. The resurrection, as a fact, must rest, if it is to be believed at all, on historical evidence; and that the Ritschlians will not admit as a ground of faith. On pp. 203-5 of the writer's *Ritschlian Theology* will be found a careful conspectus of the views of most leading Ritschlians on this subject. It is for Prof. Swing, if he challenges the statement quoted in his note, to disprove the accuracy of that summary.

The views of Ritschl's followers are not hastily to be set aside in forming a judgment as to the trend of his theology; but the more precise question is as to the belief of Ritschl himself on the Lord's resurrection. On this point Prof. Swing speaks with a confidence far beyond the evidence. It is one on which every impartial mind must admit that great ambiguity rests. The present writer has never gone further than to say that "it is difficult to catch precisely Ritschl's own attitude to miracle, and specially to the Lord's resurrection," and that "his whole position is extremely vague."[1] This, he believes, exactly represents the fact, and any stronger statement is "misleading." The passages quoted by Prof. Swing from Ritschl's second volume as to the apostolic belief in the resurrection[2] are aside from the point (as strong, *e.g.*, will be found in Baur). More importance attaches to certain passages quoted by Ecke in his *Die theol. Schule A. Ritschls* (pp. 198-9) from unpublished lectures of Ritschl (date not given), which do show that at a certain stage Ritschl's beliefs were more positive than he ever allowed publicly to appear.[3] There remains the passage in Sec. 23 of the *Unterricht* affirming Christ's "resurrection through the power of God";[4] with which may be compared another, not usually

[1] *Ritschlian Theol.*, p. 93. [2] P. 111.

[3] Cf. *Ritschlian Theol.*, p. 93.

[4] Dr Garvie quotes this sentence as one "about which he, at least, can discover no ambiguity" (Second Edition of his *Ritsch. Theol.*, p. 410). But see below. And is a belief supported by *one* passage not ambiguous?

noticed, of similar import, in his *Theol. und Met.*, p. 31. But it deserves careful notice that the word used in these two passages—the most explicit, if not the only explicit ones on the subject in Ritschl's published writings—is not the usual word *Auferstehung*, but another of more general meaning, *Auferweckung* (reawakening), and stands in a context which seems to deny the reality of physical miracle. Over against these slender references have to be placed the facts (1) of the entire silence of Ritschl on the Lord's resurrection in his (third) dogmatic volume, where, if anywhere, we should have expected to find stress laid upon it; and (2) of the express statement in the *Unterricht* (Sec. 17) that miracles are to be construed religiously, and not as occurrences contrary to the laws of nature or the orderly coherence of natural events, by which Ritschl evidently means events breaking through the ordinary causal connection of nature. Is it conceivable that, if the resurrection held, as Prof. Swing affirms, "an absolutely vital place in Ritschl's thought,"[1] he should write a work of many hundred pages on the essential doctrines of salvation, and never once make an unambiguous declaration of his belief in it.[2] In face of such a fact it will take more than marks of exclamation to show that Prof. Orr has misled his readers on this vital point. The truth is, as every one might see who penetrates to the interior of Ritschl's

[1] P. 111.

[2] We can hardly except the allusion to Christ's *Auferweckung* on p. 341 (E. T. p. 360).

thought, that it lies wholly apart from his developed theory to base religion in any degree on a fact which depends on outward historical testimony.

2. The next main subject on which misrepresentation is alleged, is Ritschl's doctrine of sin and guilt. Here, again, it is believed it will be easy to show (1) that Prof. Swing mistakes the view he criticises, and (2) misapprehends the real view of Ritschl. No one, least of all Prof. Orr, dreams of denying that Ritschl meant to affirm the reality of sin as contrariety to the ideal of good in the kingdom of God, and therefore to the will of God. But it can and must be held that Ritschl *weakens* the idea of sin in its Scriptural aspect by bringing it so largely under the category of "ignorance," [1] by regarding it as an "apparently inevitable product of the human will under the given conditions of its development," [2] and by denying heredi-

[1] Even the word "relative" before "ignorance" is struck out in later editions. Properly: for sin being measured, not by the moral law, but by the idea of the kingdom of God, it can hardly be imputed where that idea is absent.

[2] *J. and R.*, iii., p. 380 (E. T.); cf. *Unterricht*, sect. 28. The "apparently" here is not to be regarded (as is done, *e.g.*, by Dr Garvie) as throwing any doubt on the empirical unavoidableness of sin, which is deduced from the facts that the will is a "growing" quantity, and that the self-seeking desires have a start over the knowledge of the good in consciousness; but, with the subsequent clause, "conscious as we are of our freedom and independence, is nevertheless reckoned by us as guilt," is probably to be explained as a survival of Ritschl's acceptance of Kant's doctrine of transcendental freedom, in contrast with the empirical connection of phenomena by the law of cause and effect. See his vol. i., pp. 389, 394 (E. T.).

tary sin. The effect is seen in his doctrine of guilt, which is expounded in so involved and difficult a manner that misconception is pardonable, but the essential point in which Prof. Swing seems quite to miss. He finds Ritschl speaking much of guilt, and, on the strength of certain statements affirming the reality of guilt, characterises it as a fundamental misunderstanding to say that Ritschl's theory logically does away with the idea of guilt as ordinarily understood—reduces it to a subjective illusion. The mistake lies in not perceiving that what Ritschl means by "guilt" in his developed doctrine is something very different from what is ordinarily understood by this term, and that it is in the current and accepted sense (believed also to be the Scriptural one), not in Ritschl's peculiar sense, that the objectors declare the idea of guilt to be invalidated in his system. In the first place, it should be recalled that Ritschl's own doctrine varied at different stages of his development. When he published his first volume on Justification (1870), he was almost wholly under the influence of Kant in his ideas of moral law, of guilt, of accountability, of punishment; and at this stage his doctrine of guilt, as involving obligation to punishment, is strongly and unexceptionably expressed.[1] At a later period

[1] *Cf.* vol. i. pp. 389-96, 411 (E. T.), etc., and see *Ritschlian Theol.*, pp. 36, 37. "The essence of punishment," he here says, "is requital. From the idea of our practical reason, which sets the moral law in the light of guilt, it follows also that transgression *deserves* punishment" (p. 396). Traces of this mode of thought survive in the *Unterricht.*

these ideas underwent profound modification. The whole idea of retributive punishment, and the idea of justice connected therewith (*cf.* his former view in Vol. I., p. 434, E. T.) is parted with, and the existence of a punitive will in God denied. Dr Garvie, who is favourable enough to Ritschl, will bear out this statement. "If there is no wrath of God against sin, there can be no punishments by God of sin. This conclusion Ritschl expressly draws."[1] This is a great change, and, as can easily be seen, one which vitally affects his whole doctrine. At the same time Ritschl gives the doctrine a turn which substitutes another conception for that which is rejected, and somewhat conceals the change that has been made.

What, then, is Ritschl's later doctrine of guilt, and how is it affirmed to differ from the ordinary doctrine? Distinction is to be made here between what he calls "real guilt" and the "consciousness of guilt," though the relation of the two is again declared to be so close as to be inseparable, and practically "guilt" is resolved into the "consciousness of guilt."[2] (1) Guilt as "real" he identifies with the actual state of separation from God brought about by sin, and speaks of guilt as removed when this separation is brought to an end.[3] *Ipso facto,* of course, sin does separate from God; but

[1] Garvie's *Ritschlian Theology,* p. 310.

[2] *J. and R.,* iii., pp. 51, 53, 54, 56, etc.

[3] The usual wavering is seen even here. "We ought therefore rather to transpose 'the removal of the separation of sinners from God' into *the removal of the consciousness of guilt.*" *J. and R.,* iii., p. 54 (E. T.).

the *state* of separation and the *guilt* of separation are distinct ideas which ought not to be confused. If Ritschl tries to combine the two by speaking of separation from God as the central "punishment" of sin, this is admittedly done only "provisionally and dialectically,"[1] as the idea of punishment has no real place in his system. (2) The real emphasis lies, therefore, on the "*consciousness* of guilt," which is held to include such elements as a judgment of unworth passed by the individual on himself (which judgment must be presumed to be also that of God), the consciousness of separation from God, a sense of moral disturbance and feeling of self-blame; while out of it springs distrust of God, which confirms the feeling of estrangement. With all this there is no fault to find, nor has the present writer failed to do justice to it. But, as ordinarily understood, guilt is assumed to carry with it, nay, to find its peculiar character in, something further, viz., the liability to punishment (*obligatio ad pœnam*); and the consciousness of guilt, in like manner, is held to involve the sense of evil desert, of punishableness, of righteous subjection to the judgment of a holy God. This also is the Scriptural view. The sinner there is represented as lying under the just judgment of God, as condemned, as exposed to the wrath of God for his sins. *This element in the idea of guilt Ritschl undeniably eliminates*, or reduces to subjective illusion; and it is *in this sense* that he is accused of weakening, and virtually annulling, the idea of guilt. That such

[1] *J. and R.*, p. 50 (E. T.).

an element enters into the consciousness of guilt is not, of course, denied. The transgressor condemns himself, believes himself condemned of God, reads the meaning of punishments into the evils that befall him. But this valuation (*Schätzung*) of evils as punishments, which springs from the guilt-consciousness, is only, it is held, a subjective mode of judgment;[1] there is nothing corresponding to it in God's judgment. If Prof. Swing is satisfied with this representation of guilt, there is nothing more to be said. But he must not "pillory" others who show this to be Ritschl's view as "misleaders." Dorner does not put the matter too strongly when he says that "no clear, connected doctrine respecting punishment, God's punitive justice, moral freedom, and guilt, is to be found in Ritschl."[2]

3. This leads back to the charge of "fundamental misunderstanding" in regard to the "subjectivity" of Ritschl's doctrine. Prof. Orr, it seems, is continually representing Ritschl as subjective in his theory of knowledge and judgments of worth.[3] It is important here, in the first place, that the question should be correctly stated. Prof. Orr certainly never said or supposed that Ritschl's theology was subjective in the

[1] Cf. *J. and R.*, iii., pp. 354, 364-65, etc. (E. T.). Dr Garvie objects to this being spoken of as a value-judgment, and denies that Ritschl so regards it (Second Edition, p. 409), but he is clearly mistaken. It is the attribution of a penal value (*Strafwerth*) to evils that do not of themselves possess this character. These are value-judgments, but, as Ritschl tries to show, wrong ones.

[2] *System of Doctrine*, iv., p. 67. [3] P. 4.

sense that he meant to deny the objective reality of God or the spiritual world; of sin as a contradiction of the moral order and divine end of the world; of Christ, and such a work of redemption as Ritschl ascribes to Him. It is, therefore, quite beside the mark to prove that, in Ritschl's view, God, Christ, sin, redemption are real, for this is not disputed. But in another sense the charge of subjectivity brought against Ritschl's theology is fully warranted. It may be, and is, contended (1) that Ritschl bases the knowledge of God, and with it the whole religious view, on purely subjective grounds; (2) that his theology is bound up with a theory of knowledge and of judgments of value which makes an unwarranted divorce between theoretic and religious knowledge, and imperils the objective character of the latter; (3) that even objective religious realities are held to be apprehended only in subjective relations, or as "mirrored in the subject";[1] and (4) that the modes of apprehension of these realities are not limited by the strictly objective state of the case, but are moulded, shaped, heightened, coloured by religious feeling and imagination, in the way that best suits subjective (religious) needs.

It would involve too wide a discussion to go into all these points, but some examples may be selected for illustration.

And first, Prof. Swing thinks that a "misleading"

[1] *J. and R.*, iii., p. 34 (E. T.). Cf. *Leben*, ii., p. 191. Ritschl justifies this by the reflection that even the sensuous object is not observed and explained as it is in itself, but only as we represent it. See below.

account has been given of Ritschl's doctrine of knowledge. Ritschl, it is alleged, has been accused of denying the reality of "things," whereas he plainly declares that we *do* know "things," only (after Lotze) not apart from, but "in" their phenomena, or appearances to us.[1] It is to be feared that in this criticism Prof. Swing shows that he has not himself penetrated far into the interior of either Lotze's or Ritschl's theory of knowledge. There is no single point on which the critics of Ritschl, friendly or unfriendly, have been more at one than in regard to the unsatisfactoriness of his idea of the "thing." Was Ritschl realist or idealist? The present writer has no more doubt than Prof. Swing has that Ritschl meant to uphold some kind of realism; but it is just as certain that his arguments would logically lead to a different conclusion. Not only so, but Prof. Swing should be aware that the idealistic interpretation of Ritschl has been adopted by some of his warmest admirers. Thus, *e.g.*, he is interpreted by Traub,[2] in what Reischle, in his recent booklet on *Werthurtheile*,[3] regards as the ablest exposition of Ritschl's theory of knowledge. What is perhaps more striking, Traub's view is apparently homologated by Ritschl's own son in the *Leben*.[4] Even, therefore, if Prof. Orr had asserted this to be Ritschl's view (which he did not), he could not have been

[1] Pp. 78-9, 82.

[2] In *Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche*, 1894. [3] P. 9.

[4] II., p. 391. This also replies to a criticism of Dr Garvie's (p. 51). All the above writers admit the vacillating and unsatisfactory character of Ritschl's theory.

accused of "misleading." Nor can the judgment of these writers be wondered at. Ritschl holds, we shall presume, that there are actual "things," but he equally holds that the "things" are known only in the subjective impressions they produce in us, and that the idea of the "thing" itself is a purely mental construction. Even as regards Lotze—though it is impossible here to go into that—Prof. Swing is widely astray. "Lotze's theory of knowledge," he says, "cannot be twisted into subjectivism." [1] Yet Lotze himself affirms "the avoidable and thorough-going subjectivity of our cognition." [2] Space and time are to him subjective forms of our representation as much as they are to Kant.[3] He will not reject "subjective idealism" as a possible hypothesis,[4] and the spiritual beings he postulates as the causes of our perceptions have no relation of resemblance to the "things" we know. Ritschl, as his biographer admits,[5] was really in error in supposing that his theory of knowledge was essentially different from Kant's.

Next, as to the subjectivity of our knowledge of God. There is no question, as already stated, as to Ritschl's tenacious belief in God and His providence. But it is just as certain—Reischle's book above mentioned may be consulted in proof—that the idea of God is reached by Ritschl solely on the basis of a judgment of worth on our own

[1] P. 68. [2] *Outlines of Met.*, p. 143 (E. T.).
[3] *Ibid.*, pp. 89, 131; *Met.*, i., pp. 350, 354 (E. T.).
[4] *Ibid.*, p. 141. [5] *Ut supra.*

personality, and as a postulate for the securing of our position as moral and spiritual persons in the world. The idea is formed from within, and receives its shape, not from objective data, but from the working of the religious imagination (phantasy).[1] If it be replied, as it may justly be, that in the Christian religion the knowledge of God is held to be derived in a more immediate way from revelation, this only raises a new problem, and throws us back on the origin and character of the knowledge possessed by Christ of God — a knowledge which, however perfect of its kind, still is "religious" in its nature, and cannot be supposed to transcend the necessary limitations of religious knowledge in humanity. The idea of revelation, generally, is one of the least carefully investigated of all the notions in Ritschl's system. It is not a notion peculiar to Christianity, but is a mark of all religions.[2] That it is affirmed of Christ in an absolutely unique sense admits of no doubt; but whether it logically expresses more than the clearness and perfection of the idea of God and of His world-end which grew up in the consciousness of this wonderfully constituted Person must remain doubtful,[3] as also the question

[1] *Cf.* Reischle, p. 4.

[2] *J. and R.*, iii., pp. 201-2 (E. T.).

[3] "Christ's unique worth," we are told, "lies in the manner in which He mastered His spiritual powers through a self consciousness which transcended that of all other men, and by His will brought them all to bear upon His personal destination" (*J. and R.*, iii., p. 332, E. T.).

of its scientific worth. It is easy for Prof. Swing to bring forward passages about Christ and His revelation from Ritschl which, fairly construed, would mean much more. This his critics have never denied; but it only serves to bring out, what they are compelled to emphasise, the remarkable disparity between his foundation and his structure.

Lastly, there is the vexed question of "value-judgments," about which so much is still being written. The subject is too large to enter upon at any length; but before Prof. Swing repeats his charges of "misleading" he had better read what some of the newest critics say upon that difficult part of Ritschl's theology. One thing only may be remarked, viz., that it is wholly inept to quote Bernard, Luther, and Calvin, and represent Ritschl as meaning no more by his declaration that religious knowledge moves solely in "independent judgments of value" than that religious knowledge is always morally and spiritually conditioned. Ritschl needed to assume no prophet's mantle to teach us that. No one would dream of denying it. Religion is surcharged with value-judgments in this sense. One can cordially adopt the language of Luther and Calvin; but Ritschl speaks with a different voice. The core of Ritschl's theory is seen in his account of the genesis of the idea of God. The whole religious view of the world hinges with Ritschl on the idea of God. But the idea of God, as already seen, is derived from man's need of securing his personality in relation to the world. It rests on a judgment of worth;

but the worth is ultimately that of one's own personality. It is subjective in basis, and subjective in the manner in which the mind represents it to itself. The same is true of every idea which depends on it—*i.e.*, of the whole religious view. It has no point of contact with theoretic knowledge, and derives no illustration or support from it. This, it is believed, is what Ritschl means when he affirms that religion moves wholly in judgments of value. It is not denied that there is a deep truth in value-judging, as expounded, *e.g.*, by Lotze. But the worth-judgments relate to objects that are *given* by the ordinary faculties of knowledge (or to ideals); the reality of the object is not made dependent on the worth-judgment.[1]

Something might have been said, had space permitted, on Prof. Swing's views of Ritschl's doctrines of the Person of Christ and of redemption. Here there is hardly room for a charge of "misleading."

[1] How this theory affects even the doctrine of forgiveness, in giving it an aspect valid only from the standpoint of time, should be studied in such a section as that in *J. and R.*, iii., pp. 322-3 (E. T.). One or two sentences may be quoted. "On the other hand, all our reflections about God's wrath and compassion, His long-suffering and patience, His severity and sympathy, are based upon a comparison of our individual position with God, under the form of time. However indispensable these judgments may be in the texture of our religious experience, still they stand in no relation whatever to the theological conception of the whole from the view-point of eternity. . . . From the point of view of theology, therefore, no validity can be assigned to the idea of the wrath of God and His curse upon sinners yet unreconciled. . . . If we assume that God foresees their final inclusion in His kingdom, as

The question is not so much as to what Ritschl taught as to the adequacy of his teaching. It is very well to speak of what Prof. Swing calls the "Godhood" of Christ; but is this predicate satisfied by saying that Christ, as the perfect revelation of God in humanity, and as exercising spiritual supremacy over the world, has to us the "religious value" of God? The question recurs, *Ought* any being to have the religious value of God to us who is not personally and essentially God? The whole doctrine of a real incarnation is here involved. And Ritschl's system, it must be reaffirmed, has no such doctrine. Similarly it is not "misleading" to say that Ritschl's theology has no vicarious atonement, or provision for the expiation of guilt of any kind. Prof. Swing himself affirms as much. The question is, Is such a theology satisfactory as an interpretation of the Gospel? There is nothing "misleading" in denying it, if possibly there is a danger of misleading in affirming it. Perhaps, however, enough has been advanced to show that Ritschl's theology is not all such smooth sailing as Prof. Swing seems to imagine, and to enable the reader to judge of such a resounding sentence as

theologians we have no alternative but to trace their redemption back to His love in an unbroken line, even though these very redeemed ones may, as their ideas take a temporal form, have the impression of a change from divine wrath to divine mercy. We must come to the same conclusion, too, regarding the phenomena of those cases where men are conscious of guilt and regard evils as the effects of God's curse." [Dr Garvie may observe that this last case is put on the same footing as the experience of divine forgiveness.]

the following: "These world-transforming views which inspired the teaching of Albrecht Ritschl, and which have been obscured by the wood, hay, and stubble of so many of Ritschl's critics, we are now, I trust, in a better condition to estimate for ourselves at something of their true worth for constructive theology."[1]

[1] P. 115.

PROFESSOR HARNACK ON CHRIST AND HIS GOSPEL

VI

PROFESSOR HARNACK ON CHRIST AND HIS GOSPEL[1]

THE newest and not least interesting phase of Ritschlian theology has been the delivery and publication by Prof. Harnack, of Berlin, of sixteen lectures on the nature or essence of Christianity. These lectures, given in the winter of 1899-1900, to over 600 students of all Faculties, excited immediately the most lively interest throughout the whole of Germany. Probably no book has created quite so great a stir since the appearance, in the beginning of last century, of Schleiermacher's celebrated *Discourses on Religion*, with which the lectures of Harnack have repeatedly been compared. It may be questioned if the lectures have enough in them that is new to constitute them epoch-making as the older book was; but there is no doubt that they form a remarkable pronouncement. On all

[1] *Das Wesen des Christentums*, by Adolph Harnack, 1900.

What is Christianity? Sixteen lectures delivered in the University of Berlin during the Winter-Term 1899-1900. By Adolph Harnack, translated into English by Thomas Bailey Saunders, 1901 (Williams & Norgate).

hands they were recognised at the time of their delivery as a most noteworthy sign of the times. Their ability, brilliance, warmth of religious feeling, breadth of outlook, were universally acknowledged; but they called forth at the same time keen antagonisms. Extolled by one class almost as a new Gospel—a rediscovery of Christianity—they were assailed, on the other hand, from two very opposite sides: the side of those who on philosophic or other grounds were already hostile to the Gospel, and the side of those who, holding the faith of the Church, believed that Harnack's presentation was really a subversion of the Gospel in its true nature. The *furor* that ensued was immense. Books and pamphlets—criticisms, replies, defences—poured from the press in incredible numbers. The religious magazines all had their articles on the subject. Pastoral conferences discussed the lectures, generally in an adverse spirit; in certain instances rival courses of lectures were delivered (Seeberg, Cremer); translations of the book were published in several languages.[1]

In our own language we have the advantage of an excellent and spirited translation of Harnack's volume by Mr Bailey Saunders, which, however, it is necessary to add, is not without unfortunate lapses at critical points. An important instance is in the section on Christology, and has direct bearing on Harnack's esti-

[1] The best account of the literature is in a friendly pamphlet by Ernst Rolffs (reprinted from *Die Christliche Welt*). His lists occupy between four and five pages. See also a number of articles, chronicling and reviewing discussions and publications, in the *Chronik der Christlichen Welt* for 1901.

mate of Jesus. Harnack repudiates "Christology," and will have it that Jesus is to be regarded as purely human. "So it stands in the Gospels," he says; "there is nothing there that can be turned or twisted. This feeling, praying, working, struggling, and suffering individual (*Ich*) is a man who includes himself also with other men over against his God" (*der sich auch seinem Gott gegenüber mit anderen Mensehen zusammenschliesst*). The last sentence is loosely and inaccurately rendered by Mr Saunders—"who in the face of God also associates Himself with other men."[1] In an earlier passage we have the rendering "'the falling and rising again,' a new humanity opposed to the old, the God-Man—Jesus Christ—was the first to create."[2] Harnack certainly would not apply the term "God-Man" in this way to Jesus—nor does he. The word used (*Gottesmenschen*) is the object of the verb "create," in apposition to "a new humanity," and defines the character of Christ's creation. In speaking of Paul, Harnack argues that his idea of the entrance of a divine being into the world, while kept by Paul himself in subordination to the fact of redemption, could not permanently remain in this second place. The translator inverts the thought by rendering, "The fact of redemption [not in the text] could not permanently occupy the second place."[3] On Greek Catholicism an explanation of Harnack's as to the sense in which he speaks of "natural religion" is thus given: "The conception 'natural religion' may be better

[1] P. 126. [2] P. 50. [3] P. 185.

applied to the growth which a religion produces when the 'natural' forces of history have ceased playing on it."[1] This is astray. What Harnack says is that the conception may be better applied "to the final product (*Endproduckt*) of a religion when the 'natural' forces of history have ceased playing on it." These instances may suffice to show the need of care in the use of a translation which is generally admirable.

We cannot profess to wonder at the interest which these striking lectures have created. Not to speak of the brilliant style and personal popularity of their gifted author, their own qualities are sufficient to explain and justify the impression they have produced. For one thing, they raise a question, or series of questions, which the age is asking, and to which it yearns to obtain a satisfactory answer. What is Christianity? How far is its essence an abiding one? Can it be reconciled with the claims of modern science and criticism, and with the idea of a law-constituted world? What is its relation to the pressing social problems of the day, or has it any? In the next place, Harnack's lectures have the supreme attraction that they profess to give to these questions a *positive* answer. There is, ostensibly at least, no lowering of the flag as respects the abiding value of Christianity; but there is at the same time the fullest acceptance of the results of modern science, culture, and historical criticism. The reader finds in them a depth and glow of religious feeling, an overmastering conviction of the worth of

[1] P. 222.

Christ's religion, intense devotion to Christ Himself, the assurance that here is the message of all messages for our own, as for every other generation. Harnack stands between an age distracted with its doubts, negations, and futile search for good in finite aims and earthly conditions, and the eternal Gospel, which he professes to interpret in a way that points the road to peace and satisfaction for the spirit of man. He holds no brief for ecclesiastical Christianity. On the contrary, he practically throws it overboard. He accepts nearly in its entirety what may be called the view of the world of the man of culture.[1] He finds no place *e.g.*, for real, though there may be some for seeming, miracles. He calls a halt only when the view of the world becomes monistic—when the thinker would break down the oppositions between "God and the World, the Here and the Beyond, the visible and the invisible, matter and spirit, the life of impulse and the life of freedom, physics and ethics."[2] This, all the same, is a rather important qualification of the position that Christianity has nothing to do with philosophy or theories of nature.

[1] His admirer, Rolffs, says of him: "In fact, Harnack presents a type of modern Christianity. . . . He here offers to the present age a Christianity which is elastic enough to take up into itself the new ideas won for modern culture by the labours of Lessing and Kant, of Goethe and Schiller, of Hegel and Schleiermacher, and by the exact sciences of the nineteenth century, without thereby losing any of its religious warmth and moral strictness. Such a fusion of the Christian religion and modern culture is simply a necessity for the health of the spiritual life of Germany" (p. 4).

[2] P. 150 (E. T.).

It is still more, however, in the actual contents of the lectures, and their outstanding ideas, that we find the explanation of the fascination they have had for so many minds. When we turn from the Gospel as we have been accustomed to conceive of it, to the positive teachings of this book, we do not find ourselves in a wholly alien atmosphere. The things which Harnack finds in the Gospel—in which he places the essence of Christianity—are really in the Gospel, and form no inconsiderable part of it. With much of his exposition of Christ's teaching, one feels himself in entire accord; *e.g.*, in what he has to say of the Lord's Prayer, of the Sermon on the Mount, of the infinite dignity of the soul, of Christ's "transvaluation" of all earthly values. On these and kindred subjects the book abounds in things noble, inspiring, elevating, and suggestive—above all, true. It is a feature in the lectures that they frankly discuss, often with great insight and helpfulness, the relation of the Gospel to the different aspects of life in the world—to asceticism, to social problems, to constituted authority, to art and culture. The historical survey, moreover, of the development of Christianity from the apostolic age, through successive periods, to the present, is marked, as was inevitable, by power and appreciation. It is possible, while not altogether accepting the author's standpoint, to recognise the justice he does to the thoughts of great personalities like Paul, Augustine, and Luther, and even to agree with much that he says on the dangers of intellectualism in religion, and on

the flagrant departures from the true idea of the Gospel in Greek and Roman Catholicism.

If, therefore, we do not dwell further, as it would be agreeable to do, on this meritorious side of Harnack's lectures, we trust it will be apparent that it is only because our proper object calls us in another direction. It might indeed seem, after what has just been said, as if, after all, it could only be a question of *degree* between Harnack and those who differ from him as to what constitutes the true essence of Christianity. There cannot, it may be thought, at least be fundamental or vital differences. Yet that is precisely what, in our opinion, as in that of many others who have criticised him, there are. If the question be pressed, How is that possible? the answer, and solution of the paradox, is not far to seek. It is to be found in the fact that the elements which Harnack acknowledges are, indeed, Christian; but there are other and even more vital elements left out; while, even for the Christianity he acknowledges, the proper roots are taken away. The Christianity with which Harnack presents us is not only an inadequate Christianity, but it does not, and never could, subsist of itself, in divorce from other elements which he ignores. If nothing more is conceded to Christianity than he allows—if more is not put into the Person, work, and Gospel of Christ than he grants,—if Gospel and Saviour are not drawn closer together than in his presentation, — then not only must Christianity, as the Churches have hitherto known it, disappear, but his

own Christianity will remain a thing in the air, a cloud-picture that must dissolve and vanish away also. The importance of the lectures is not less, but greater, on this account, for they bring us, like many other phenomena in our age, to the true alternative with which the Churches are now faced. Harnack is right in saying that the vital question raised by his lectures is—What *is* Christianity?

The statement just made will hardly be seriously questioned that, if Harnack's contentions are admitted, Christianity, at least as we have hitherto known it,—as embodied not merely in the dogmatic structure of the creeds, but in liturgies, hymns, prayers, preaching, in our whole Church worship and profession,—goes by the board. This is never, indeed, quite broadly admitted in the lectures. On the contrary, there is the implied claim to preserve the essence, not only of Christ's own Gospel, but of the Pauline, Augustinian, and Reformation Gospel as well. But there should be no illusion here. A scheme of Christianity which allows no room for miracle; which rejects all doctrine save that of God the Father; which scouts Christology; which concedes to Jesus no substantial place in His own Gospel; which does not admit the resurrection; which has no atonement for sin, or regeneration by a living spirit,—is not the Gospel as any historical Church to-day professes or practises it.

But is this, it may fairly be asked, a true description, or not rather a caricature of Harnack's positions? For, as we are immediately to see, Harnack *does* speak of

Jesus as the Son of God, and that in a unique sense; of the Easter Faith, and of the hope of immortality that springs from Christ's grave; of expiatory sacrifice (not indeed in Christ's, but in the apostolic Gospel); of forgiveness of sins, and of a new life in the Spirit. He does speak of these things, and that is the trouble of it, when we seek to weave his thoughts into some kind of unity. For, not only does he not speak of them consistently, or in terms that convey clear ideas to the mind,—not only do his utterances swim in a tantalising vagueness,—not only are they not brought together in coherency (this might involve doctrine), and have not an adequate basis shown for them,—but it is Harnack's most energetic contention that these things do not belong to the essence of the Gospel as Jesus Himself taught it. Let us see how the matter stands.

No single statement of Harnack has attracted more notice, or been more adversely commented upon, than this—that Jesus Himself does not belong to His own Gospel. His words literally are: "Not the Son, but the Father only, belongs to the Gospel, as Jesus Himself proclaimed it."[1] The Gospel of Jesus, as we shall find, is summed up by him under three heads—the Kingdom of God and its coming; God the Father, and the infinite value of the human soul; the higher righteousness, and the commandment of love. Jesus is the revealer of these truths, but they are separable from His Person, as truth is from him that utters it.

[1] The translation gives: "The Gospel, as Jesus proclaimed it, has to do with the Father only, and not with the Son" (p. 144).

Jesus is the bearer of the Gospel, but is no part of His own message.

Harnack has replied to one of his critics (Cremer) on this point, that, in quoting the statement that Jesus does not belong to the Gospel, he has overlooked the qualification, "as Jesus Himself taught it." Cremer, with great justice, answers that it had not occurred to him to regard this as a qualification of the statement. He had viewed it rather as a confirmation of the assertion. For the very object of the section in which it occurs is to show from Christ's own teaching what is the essence of the Gospel. Harnack warns us against supposing that the Gospel which Jesus preached was something provisional. "To contend," he says, "that Christ meant His whole message to be taken provisionally, and everything in it to receive a different interpretation after His death and resurrection, nay, parts of it to be put aside as of no account, is a desperate supposition."[1] Christ's Gospel is the whole Gospel; the Gospel in its purity; to it nothing is to be added. The power and productiveness of it are, indeed, only to be measured by its effects in history; but that alone is genuine which is evolved from the original norm, and accords with it. "In the leading features which we described in the earlier lectures," he writes, "the whole of the Gospel is contained, and we must keep it free from the intrusion of any alien element: God and the soul, the soul and

[1] P. 143 (E. T.). No one holds that parts of Christ's Gospel were to be put aside,

its God.[1] The proposition, then, truly represents Harnack's contention; yet, in defending it, he is, we venture to think (1) unjust to himself; (2) inconsistent with his own later statements; and (3), what is most important of all, untrue to the facts of the case.

If, indeed, Harnack really meant what his language implies, he would represent a marked retrogression from the conception of Christianity which might be called the attainment of the past century. Few theologians of that century, to whom Christ was more than simply a moral teacher, failed to emphasise the fact that Jesus and His message formed an inseparable whole—that He was Himself the centre of His message. It was the imperishable service of Schleiermacher to his age that, while in his *Discourses on Religion* he took up a position in some respects not unlike Harnack's, in the final working up of his system he got beyond this, and led the way in replacing Christ and His redemption in the very heart of the Gospel. Christianity, he teaches, is that form of religion in which everything is referred back to the redemption accomplished through Jesus of Nazareth.[2] Similarly Ritschl, to whose type of theology Harnack is regarded as belonging, identifies Jesus in the closest fashion with His religion. In contrast with the founders of Parseeism, Judaism, Islam, and Buddhism, Jesus is held to be incorporated into Christianity as a central and essential part of it.[3] Herrmann, again, practically

[1] P. 142 (E. T.). [2] *Der christ. Glaube*, sect. 11.
[3] *Just. and Recon.*, pp. 385-7 (E. T.).

resolves Christianity into the powerful impression we receive from the Gospel that God is actually meeting us in the historical Person of Christ. Does Harnack, then, mean to deny this? Not altogether, though he is unable, in consistency with his fundamental view, to do the truth the justice it demands. Even in the context of the statement quoted, we find such declarations as these: "*He is the way to the Father, and as He is the appointed of the Father, so he is the Judge as well.* . . . It is not as *one* element that he belongs to the Gospel, but *He was the personal realisation and strength of the Gospel, and is felt to be so still.*"[1] Jesus does belong to the Gospel, then; still, it may be held, only as the personal medium of its truth and spirit. In idea the Gospel can still be distinguished from the Person who reveals it.

It is not so easy to clear Harnack of inconsistency when we advance to the sections dealing with the historical developments of Christianity. Here two things stand out plainly: (1) that the Gospel has

[1] *Cf.* E. T., p. 145 (the italics are Harnack's). In almost verbal contradiction with his language in the lectures, are the words of Harnack in a "*Zusatz*" to the section on "The Gospel of Jesus according to His own self-virtues," in his *History of Dogma* (Second Edition, E. T., i., p. 71). "The peculiar character of the Christian religion," he says, "is conditioned by the fact, that every reference to God is at the same time a reference to Jesus Christ, and *vice versâ*. In this sense the Person of Christ is the central point of the religion, and inseparably united with the content of piety, as a sure reliance upon God. Such a union does not, as is supposed, bring a foreign element into the pure essence of religion. . . . In this rests its positive character." The passage refers to Herrmann's *Verkehr*.

undergone a transformation, so that Christ now *is* an essential—even in an important sense *the* essential—part of it; and (2) that this change is apparently regarded by Harnack, not as anything blamable, but as a genuine, and altogether proper and necessary development of Christianity. This holds good of the pictures given of the Christianity of the Apostolic Age, and specially of Paul; of the Christianity of Augustine, which is extolled as the dominant force in Western Catholicism; and of the Christianity of Luther, who brought back the Church to its lost inheritance in the Gospel at the Reformation. The grand fact in the Christianity of the Apostolic Church is rightly declared to be the recognition of Jesus as the living *Lord*. "The primitive community," we are told, "called Jesus its Lord because He had sacrificed His life for it, and because its members were convinced that He had been raised from the dead, and was then sitting on the right hand of God."[1] Of Paul, who, wo are informed, "stood on exactly the same ground as the primitive community,"[2] the statement is made that he "definitely conceived the Gospel as the message of the redemption already effected, and of salvation now present. He preached the crucified and risen Christ, who gave us access to God, and therewith righteousness and peace."[3] Of Augustine—that "religious genius of extraordinary depth and power"—the testimony is similar. The cardinal thought in his theology is *grace;* but "with Paul he feels that grace is wholly the work

[1] P. 153 (E. T.). [2] *Ibid.* [3] P. 176 (E. T.).

of God, but that it is obtained by and through Christ, and possessed as forgiveness of sins, and as the spirit of love."[1] Regarding Luther—the third of our great names—our author says: "Luther's pronouncement on Justification not only reflects in the main, and in spite of certain irreducible differences, Paul's train of thought, but is also in point of aim in exact correspondence with Jesus' teaching."[2]

It is surely a strange alternative to which we are here brought. Either these ideas of Jesus as the living Lord, and of the connection of His death and resurrection with our salvation, found in the apostles, in Augustine, and in Luther, are part of the genuine Gospel—belong to its true essence—or they do not. If they do not, then the Christian Church has gone astray from its birth in its conception of what the Gospel is; if they do, then Harnack is manifestly in error in affirming that Jesus is not an integral part of His Gospel, rightly understood. It is vain to argue that even in these later developments the essential things are still the Fatherly love and providence of God, the value of the soul, and spiritual righteousness; that all else is husk and wrapping. That may be Harnack's view, but assuredly it was in no wise the view of Paul, or Augustine, or Luther, with whom the death of Christ for our sins, His resurrection and exaltation, His living presence and working in men's souls, were inalienable convictions. As well might a branch growing on a tree declare that the tree is not

[1] P. 259 (E. T.). [2] P. 284 (E. T.).

essential to its growth and fruitfulness, as, in the view of these teachers, Christians declare that Christ is not an essential part of the Gospel by which they live. The curious thing is, that Harnack seems to hold *both* of these positions—first, that the ideas named have a legitimate place in the Gospel; and, second, that they are not part of the Gospel as Christ taught it—not part, that is, of the pure and original, the one normative, Gospel. In this it seems impossible to clear Harnack's view of an element of self-contradiction.

This leads now to the question—What really *is* the Gospel, and what is Christ's true relation to it? To answer this, it will be necessary to look for a little first at what Harnack has to say of Jesus Christ Himself. This is given mainly in the section of the lectures on Christology. Christology, if one may say it without offence, is Harnack's *bête noire*. He will have none of it. "The sentence, 'I am the Son of God,'" he says, "was not inserted in the Gospel by Jesus Himself, and to put that sentence there side by side with the others is to make an addition to the Gospel."[1] The publican in the temple, the widow who cast in her mite, the lost son, knew nothing of "Christology," yet were accepted. Underlying a good deal of our author's rhetoric on this subject, there is, it may be remarked, something that must be called a travesty of ordinary belief and practice. The assumption is that it is customary in the Church—or would be thought proper—in dealing with prodigals and

[1] P. 145 (E. T.).

penitents, to press on them a formal Christology for acceptance as a condition of their salvation. Does Prof. Harnack really know of any instance of such a proceeding? A divine Christ may indeed be presented,—One who, being rich, for our sakes became poor, and died and rose again for our redemption; but this is not to be confounded with demanding assent to the definitions and distinctions of a Chalcedonian Christology—for it is really this Prof. Harnack has always in his view. A Chalcedonian or other Christology may be implicit in what is preached or taught, but assuredly no sane expounder of the Gospel would put it in the forefront of his message to sinners.

One understands better this dislike of Harnack to Christology when his own view of Jesus comes to be unfolded. That view is, indeed, as high as it could well be within the limits of the merely human. In Jesus, he tells us, "the divine appeared in as pure a form as it can appear on earth."[1] He had a perfectly unique knowledge of the Father, and in the strength of His filial consciousness could, and did, speak of Himself as peculiarly the Son of God. "How," says Harnack, "He came to this consciousness of His unique relation to God as a Son; how He came to the consciousness of His power, and to the consciousness of the obligation and the mission which this power carries with it, is His secret, and no psychology will ever fathom it. . . . Here all research must stop."[2] Harnack hardly seems to realise how difficult it is to

[1] P. 146 (E. T.). [2] P. 128 (E. T.).

admit even this much, and yet fit Jesus into a non-miraculous theory of the world. Yet this is his attempt. This wonderful Personality is placed within the frame of a purely human life. The Logos-doctrine is of course rejected. There was no incarnation of One from above such as Paul and John, and the generations after them, believed in. Jesus, in words already quoted,[1] was a feeling, praying, working, struggling, and suffering man, who included Himself along with other men over against His God. Not only was His life purely human, it was likewise, apart from the inexplicable element above-mentioned, wholly natural. There was no miraculous birth; there were no miracles of the ministry (though there were wonderful faith-cures); there was no bodily resurrection. "In this sense, as an interruption of the order of nature, there can be no such things as 'miracles.' . . . Miracles, it is true, do not happen; but of the marvellous and inexplicable there is plenty."[2] In the apostolic preaching of the resurrection it is necessary to distinguish between "the Easter Faith" and "the Easter Message."[3] The Easter Faith is the conviction that Jesus, as One in whose soul was the eternal life, lives still with God; the Easter Message is the story of the empty grave and of the appearances to the disciples. The latter, modern enlightenment requires us to reject. It is evident enough that, on such a foundation, there can be no Christology; evident also,

[1] See above, p. 117. [2] P. 26 (E. T.).
[3] Pp. 160-1 (E. T.).

if this be all, that Christ is not a part of His own Gospel. It will be considered presently whether He can be the support of even such a Gospel as Prof. Harnack allows us to retain.

What the essential content of the Gospel of Jesus is, on Harnack's reading of it, has already been indicated. It sums itself up in three things—the teaching of Jesus on the *kingdom of God*, which, divested of eschatological ideas, resolves itself into the rule of God in the soul ("God Himself in His power");[1] on *God the Father* (including faith in providence) and *the infinite value of the soul;* and on *the higher righteousness*, motived by love. The teaching on the kingdom of God is held to include also forgiveness of sins. The whole Gospel, it is affirmed, may be brought under each of these heads, but the second is the most characteristic. "The whole of Jesus' message may be reduced to these two heads—God as the Father, and the human soul so ennobled that it can and does unite with Him."[2] Another summary is—"In the combination of these ideas—God the Father, Providence, the position of men as God's children, the infinite value of the human soul — the whole Gospel is expressed."[3] Yet more succinctly—"In those leading features of it which we described, the whole of the Gospel is contained, and we must keep it free from the intrusion of any alien element: God and the soul, the soul and its God."[4] These teachings of Jesus,

[1] P. 56 (E. T.).
[2] P. 66 (E. T.).
[3] P. 68 (E. T.).
[4] P. 142 (E. T.).

we are reminded, were not wholly new.[1] The essential truth contained in them had long before been declared by psalmists and prophets. But now it was proclaimed with new strength and vigour. The spring that had long been choked up burst forth afresh, and broke a new way for itself through the rubbish of priests and theologians. The word might be the same, but it received new power from the Personality behind it.

Such was Christ, and such was Christianity, as Harnack depicts it in these lectures; it is now imperative to ask how far the picture given accords with the actual facts. A preliminary question has already been suggested, whether, viz., Harnack's view of Jesus will support even the attenuated Gospel he would have us derive from His teaching? That is a question of greater moment than may at first sight appear. It is not doubted that Jesus entertained those beautiful and elevating conceptions of God the Father, of providence, of a kingdom of God, of eternal life, in which Harnack finds the essence of His Gospel—that He lived by them, communicated them, and has implanted them as convictions in myriads of minds. But difficulties arise when we go a stage further, and ask, What, even in Jesus, is the guarantee for these conceptions? The late Prof. Bruce put the same question, in a chapter entitled "Christianity without Miracle," in his *Miraculous Elements of Christianity*. "God a Father," he said, "man His

[1] Pp. 45-48 (E. T.).

son, a benignant providence, a power in prayer, a life beyond the tomb—behold the creed of Jesus shown to best advantage in His conduct. A beautiful creed, and good for Him, and good for all who can hold it. But there is the difficulty. With miracle the infallible guide disappears, and there remains only a man with very charming views about God, man, and the universe: views for which He seems to have been indebted to a happy natural temperament, and which, to men less fortunately endowed, may be impossible and incredible."[1] For Jesus, in Harnack's view, it cannot be forgotten, was still a man whose mind in other respects was largely under the influence of His age, and dominated by it in the shape given to many of His conceptions. He stood on the platform of his time in natural knowledge; shared its unscientific views of angels and demons; conceived of His own mission in the mould of current Messianic expectations; took over from Jewish eschatology His whole dramatic mode of picturing the future of the kingdom of God, the end of the world, His second coming, resurrection, and judgment. Is it then an unreasonable thing to ask, What guarantee have we that his views of God and providence, original and consoling as in many respects they may be, are not coloured by the same influences, and marked by similar limitations? If His consciousness is in error

[1] *Mirac. Elements*, p. 369. "With miracle" in this passage means, with a supernaturally-constituted Person, standing in supernatural relation to God.

on that which is lesser, how shall we trust it in the greatest things of all? It will be conceded, of course, that there is some reality at the basis of Jesus' religious ideas and experiences—some Power in the universe of which His beautiful ideas of God are symbols. But are they more? Can the modern mind believe in the Father in heaven, with His angels around Him, as Jesus, in His child-like faith, believed in Him, or in a special providence, that marks the fall of the sparrow, and attends to the wants and requests of individuals? We do not forget that, according to Harnack, Jesus is presumed to arrive at His knowledge of the Father in some way which is to us a "secret." But if it is a "secret," and that is all we can say of it, the original doubt remains. It is not supposed, if we understand our author rightly, that Jesus reached that knowledge by other avenues than those which are open to mankind generally.[1] He may have been the pathfinder, but others can follow. One asks, then—What are these avenues leading out from the spirit of man to God, and how far do they guarantee to us objective knowledge? It is not enough to speak of truths that shine in their own light, or are verified by immediate spiritual intuitions; for it may be doubted whether, apart from

[1] This is not incompatible with a divine stimulus and guidance, but always on the basis of natural endowment. Even this, however, leads us into the supernatural in a way that Harnack's theory, strictly interpreted, would disallow. It leaves, besides, the measure and degree of this illumination in obscurity, as also how far it guarantees against error.

experience, the mind has any such power of intuition of God as this view ascribes to it. Many roads have been sought from the human spirit to God—innate ideas, rational demonstrations, postulates of the moral life, the feeling of dependence,—but none of these is adequate to reach that knowledge of God as Father which Jesus possessed. Growingly, therefore, the conviction deepens, that the only adequate way in which the relation of man to God can be grounded is through sure, authoritative revelation of God Himself; and if such revelation is believed to be given in Christ, we must have the courage to say that here is something which breaks through the charmed circle of a universe regulated only by natural law. We must find in the ideas of Jesus more than the results of a psychological process; must be prepared to affirm regarding Him such a oneness of knowledge, purpose, and will with God as gives pure, direct, supernatural insight into the mind and will of God towards men — such a "solidarity" of Jesus with God as even Ritschl would contend for.

But now the question recurs—Is it the case that the Gospel is as barren of Christology as Prof. Harnack declares? We are compelled to reply in the negative. Already the image of Jesus which Harnack gives threatens to break through the limits of the merely natural; and it is only by ignoring other elements equally original in the portraiture of the Gospel, that even the semblance of a Christ who is no more than man can be preserved. The Johannine writings

we are not, of course, permitted to use; if we were, dispute would be ended. But, keeping even to the synoptics, we find—whether palatable or not—a Christology there also. Passing over the miraculous birth, and starting with the ministry, we come first to the preaching of John the Baptist. Here, at the very beginning, in Harnack's presentation, we note a remarkable omission. Harnack dwells eloquently on John's proclamation of the near advent of the kingdom of God, and on his call to repentance. But there is another indubitably genuine element in the Baptist's preaching which Harnack overlooks—the announcement of the coming of One greater than himself, the latchet of whose shoes he was not worthy to unloose, whose winnowing fan was in His hand, and who would baptize with the Holy Ghost, and with fire.[1] That this description was taken over by the synoptic writers upon Jesus, and was taken over by Jesus upon Himself, no one can reasonably doubt. But let anyone reflect on what is implied in this one claim—to baptize with the Holy Ghost. Is it a claim that any ordinary man could make? Could an Isaiah, or Paul, or John, have made it? Is there not superhuman dignity, as well as superhuman functions, implied in it? Yet probably there is no one who feels it to be in the least incongruous with the picture of Jesus in the Gospels. Surely, also, One whose function it is to baptize with the Holy Ghost must be recognised as belonging to the Gospel.

[1] Matthew iii. 11; Mark i. 7, 8; Luke iii. 16.

Take next what Harnack recognises to be an essential part of Christ's Gospel — the preaching of the kingdom of God. Can it be seriously maintained that the preaching of the kingdom of God by Jesus in the synoptics is dissociated from His Person? Jesus is not simply, like John, the herald of the kingdom, but appears as the Founder and personal Representative of it. In Him the kingdom is already there! But this is not the whole. Jesus is more than Founder of the kingdom? He is King and Lord over it. It is *His* kingdom under the Father. Its authority in heaven and earth are committed to Him. Its powers are in Him, issue from Him, and are wielded by Him. He is the source and dispenser of its blessings. Harnack quotes the reply of Jesus to the Baptist—"Go and shew John again those things which ye do hear and see: the blind receive their sight," etc.[1] But what are we to say of One of whom such things can be declared? What human measure can we apply to Him? Can He be placed in a merely natural frame, or is it legitimate to say that His Gospel can be dissociated from His Person?

Again, Jesus claimed authority on earth to forgive sins. He did not simply proclaim God's forgiveness to the penitent, as any prophet or preacher might do, but arrogated the right to say to this one and that one, in His own name, and by His own authority, "Thy sins are forgiven thee."[2] His pronouncement was so

[1] Matt. xi. 4, 5.
[2] Matthew ix. 2, 6; Luke vii. 48.

absolute as to provoke the charge of blasphemy.[1] Can it be held that this is a power which every good man is entitled to assume? Surely it is not. "Who can forgive sins but God only?" Herrmann, in a striking passage in his *Verkehr*, protests against the notion that forgiveness of sins follows as a matter of course from the truth of the love of God. "If the work of Jesus be seriously considered," he says, "it will rather make the impression on the student that the forgiveness of sins is not a matter of course, but is something utterly marvellous . . . an act of incomparable goodness."[2] Only One, therefore, who was conscious of perfect unity of mind and will with God, could dare to speak with the decision and authority that Jesus did on this subject. Harnack, we cannot help feeling, manifests in this connection[3] a very inadequate appreciation of the place and importance which the forgiveness of sins holds in Christ's Gospel. It is mentioned, indeed, but in a very subordinate relation to other aspects of the kingdom. In Christ's own mind, it is the first, and chief, and most indispensable of blessings. Not only, however, does Jesus forgive sin; in His later ministry at least (in John earlier), He connects this forgiveness of sins explicitly with His death and resurrection. It is not in the apostolic doctrine, as Harnack's treatment might suggest, but in His own, that this relation is established. The Son of Man gives His life a ransom for many;[4] the prophecies, including those of the

[1] Matt. ix. 3; Mark ii. 7.
[2] E. T., p. 103.
[3] Elsewhere he does more justice to it.
[4] Mark x. 45.

vicariously suffering Servant, are declared to be fulfilled in Him;[1] His blood is shed for the remission of sins.[2] After the resurrection, remission of sins is to be preached in His name. The freeness of forgiveness illustrated, *e.g.*, in the parable of the Lost Son, does not militate against this idea of mediation. It may safely be affirmed that at no point were Christ's preaching and promises of forgiveness dissociated in His consciousness from His Person and saving activity. The dependence of forgiveness on His Person and work is only a corollary from the fact that the Messianic salvation as a whole depends on Him. If the Messianic salvation as a whole is dependent on Him as its procuring cause, the forgiveness of sins, which is an essential part of it, must be so also. This, again, affords a measure of the dignity of the Person concerned—One on whom devolves the redemption of a world.

In entire agreement with what has been said of Christ's relation to the future as the Founder of the kingdom of God, the Redeemer from sin, and the Baptizer with the Holy Ghost, is the picture given in the synoptics of His relation to past revelation. Jesus

[1] Mark ix. 12; Luke xxii. 37, etc.

[2] Matt. xxvi. 28. Harnack himself says, in his *History of Dogma*: "In this service (to the kingdom of God) Jesus also reckoned the sacrifice of His life, designating it as a 'ransom,' which He offered for the redemption of man." . . . "That Jesus at the celebration of the first Lord's Supper described His death as a sacrifice which He should offer for the forgiveness of sin, is clear from the account of Paul" (I., p. 66, E. T.). How, then, is this omitted here from his view of Christ's Gospel?

appears in these records as the consummation and fulfilment of that old revelation in all its parts. This also was the point of view of Christ's own consciousness. The old Covenant terminated in Him. He occupies in this respect a position which distinguishes Him absolutely from all, even the greatest, who went before Him, or have come after; for prophet or apostle never lived who would have dared to speak of himself as the goal of all God's dispensations—the fulfiller of law and prophets—as Jesus habitually did. This alone gives Him an entirely unique position in our race, and sufficiently refutes Harnack's contention that He includes Himself simply with other men over against God.

When, from these more public aspects of Christ's ministry, we turn to his personal character and designations, the same transcendence of the limitations of ordinary humanity meets us. One who is to redeem others, must Himself be without sin; and alone of all humanity, Jesus appears in the Gospels as absolutely sinless—the Holy One of God. It is to be presumed that Prof. Harnack would admit this, though it would have been interesting had there been a more unequivocal acknowledgment of the fact. It is not necessarily involved in what is said of the absence of traces of a moral struggle. The presence of One who is a moral miracle in history, is certainly a serious difficulty for a non-miraculous theory of the world. Equally significant with His holiness are the designations by which Jesus expresses the

peculiarity of His consciousness of Himself—Son of Man and Son of God. That in the former title lies the consciousness of a unique relation to humanity we cannot doubt;[1] the latter is not less clearly the expression of a unique relation to God. The uniqueness Harnack acknowledges, but he seeks the explanation solely in the sphere of Christ's knowledge of God. No man knoweth the Father save the Son[2]—in that knowledge, he thinks, consists the Sonship. Surely, however, this is to invert the right relation of ideas. The Sonship does not spring from the knowledge of the Father, but it is because Jesus is the Son that such knowledge is possible to Him. It is, as already remarked, singular that Harnack does not seem better to appreciate the extraordinary position in which this claim to be the sole medium of the knowledge of the Father to humanity places Him who makes it. It is the claim to a perfect reciprocity of knowledge between Father and Son: one, therefore, in which Jesus does not include Himself with other men as against God, but unites Himself with God over against men. That these two titles carry with them Messianic connotations may be admitted; but to Christ's own consciousness it must be contended that they expressed something primarily personal—something in which He knew Himself to be distinguished from every individual of the race. It is

[1] This notwithstanding discussions as to the force of the Aramaic equivalents.

[2] Matt. xi. 27.

certainly in keeping with this unique character—though inharmonious with Prof. Harnack's picture—when Jesus is represented throughout the Gospels as performing works of a truly miraculous character: healing the sick, cleansing the lepers, raising the dead—works which cannot be resolved into "moral therapeutics" without surrendering the credibility of the entire Gospel narrative.

It is not disputed by Prof. Harnack that Jesus identified Himself with the Messianic hope of His nation, while purifying and spiritualising that hope, and that towards the close of His ministry He gave Himself out publicly to His disciples and the people as the promised Christ of God. The elements of a Christology lie already in Peter's great confession, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God."[1] It was not till He had obtained that confession—the result of a divine illumination—that Jesus felt that He had "Rock" on which He could build a Church. But it is specially in the eschatological sayings of the Gospels that we see how tremendous was the claim involved in this acceptance by Jesus of the *rôle* of Messiah. We are instructed that many of the ideas in the eschatological teaching of Jesus were borrowed from current Jewish beliefs. However this may be, the fact remains that Jesus took them over upon Himself, and did not shrink from proclaiming His rising again from the dead,[2] and future coming as Judge of the

[1] Matt. xvi. 16.

[2] The sayings are challenged; but the fact is certain that Jesus anticipated His triumph over death, and return in glory.

world, and Arbiter of the everlasting destinies of mankind. Harnack quietly drops this side of Christ's teaching; but it is there, and has to be taken account of in estimating the value which Jesus Himself placed upon His Person. That value again transcends anything that can be placed in the frame of a merely natural life.[1] With this agrees the great fact of the resurrection, by which, Paul says, Jesus was declared (defined) to be the Son of God with power.[2] It is hardly necessary to discuss Harnack's distinction of the Easter Faith and the Easter Message, for critics on his own side have abundantly shown the impossibility of separating the two. The apostolic Church knew nothing of an Easter Faith which had not the resurrection of the Lord from Joseph's tomb as its basis.

The Gospel of John has, after Harnack's example, been left aside in this discussion; but it may now well be asked, in view of what has been advanced, whether the contrast between the Johannine Christ

[1] The Rev. R. H. Charles, in a sermon on "The Messiah of the Old Testament, and Christ of the New Testament," observes:— "As other claims which are without parallel in the Old Testament prophecy of the Messiah, we should mention first His claim to judge the world; and next, to forgive sin; and finally, to be the Lord of life and death. In the Old Testament these prerogatives belong to God alone as the essential Head of the kingdom, and appear in those prophetic descriptions of the kingdom which ignore the figure of the Messiah, and represent God as manifesting Himself among men. Here then we have the Christ of the Gospels claiming not only to fulfil the Old Testament prophecies of the various ideals of the Messiah, but also to discharge the functions of God Himself in relation to the kingdom." *Expositor*, Vol. V. (Sixth Series), p. 258.

[2] Rom. i. 4.

and the Jesus of the synoptic Gospels is so great as has sometimes been alleged. It is to be remembered that the Fourth Evangelist also, in the representation he gives of Jesus, claims to stand on the ground of history. It was not from abstract speculation, but from what he and his fellow apostles beheld of the glory of the only-begotten Son while He tabernacled among them, that he rose to the belief that in Jesus the Word had been made flesh.[1] He gives deeper utterances of Jesus than the other evangelists, as on pre-existence; but those who allege an absolute contrast between the two pictures can hardly have realised the extraordinary uniqueness in character, claims, and functions of the Person whom the synoptics present to us as the Christ. One saying at least — that already quoted on the knowledge of the Father—is allowed to have quite a Johannine ring; but would it really surprise us in the Jesus of the synoptics to hear Him declare that He was the light of the world, the bread of life, the giver of the living water, of which, if any one drank, he would never thirst again? Which is greater, to say, "I am the light of the world,"[2] or to say, "Neither doth any know the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son willeth reveal Him?"[3] to say, "I am the bread of life,"[4] or to break the bread at the supper, and say, "This is my body, which is broken for you"?[5] to speak of

[1] John i. 14; 1 John i. 1-3.
[2] John viii. 12.
[3] Matt. xi. 27.
[4] John vi. 48.
[5] Matt. xxvi. 26; *cf.* 1 Cor. xi. 24.

giving the living water of the Spirit,[1] or to be announced as the Baptizer with the Holy Ghost?[2] Equally with the Christ of John, the Jesus of the synoptics constantly speaks and thinks of Himself as in a different category from those whom He addresses. Even in such a matter as the use of the word "faith," it is very noticeable that, while constantly inculcating faith on others, Jesus never once uses the word, or any of its cognates, with reference to Himself, nor do others use it of Him. The reason can only be that His knowledge of the Father was too immediate, too clear, too unerring, to be properly described as "faith." Faith in us is our response to the revelation of the Father given by Jesus; but there was no other to whose revelation *His* faith could respond. He possessed the knowledge of the Father for Himself — immediately, intuitively, at first hand. In quite the same manner does John make Jesus speak of the Father as showing the Son all things that Himself doeth.[3]

The conclusion to which we are led is, that Jesus *does* belong to His Gospel, as the apostolic preaching affirmed, and that, if His Person were removed, there would be no Gospel left. Jesus belongs to His Gospel as the Founder of the kingdom of God, and King and Lord over it; as the Redeemer who, by His death and resurrection, has obtained everlasting salvation for us; as the Bestower of the Holy Spirit; as the living Lord, through union with whom the Church subsists. The

[1] John iv. 14. [2] Matt. iii. 11. [3] John v. 20.

powers and blessings of the kingdom are altogether bound up with Him, and reach us through Him. A Christianity from which these elements are eliminated must, in the nature of the case, fail to sustain itself. In no sense can the Christianity of Jesus fit in with a theory of the world which excludes miracles; for it is itself a miracle—a miracle of grace from first to last, as Prof. Harnack himself acknowledges, a supernatural gift and blessing. The gulf cannot be concealed between the Christian view of the world, and a view which refuses to accept the presence and working in history of a supernatural Power.

The question of the place of doctrine in Christianity, raised by Prof. Harnack, is one on which we have not thought fit to touch. Everything, in such a matter, depends on what Christianity is conceived to be. If its content is as rich as we suppose, there will be abundant room and need for doctrine, and doctrine in some shape cannot permanently be dispensed with. Even Prof. Harnack will not allow that Christianity can reconcile itself with a monism which abolishes the distinctions between God and nature, spirit and matter, the here and the beyond, physics and ethics. But if so, into what depths are we already plunged? Profound and reverent thinking has never really injured piety; but a piety which tries to subsist without it soon runs to seed, or falls a prey to rationalism.

Additional Note

Harnack on Christ's Deity.—It is only just to refer to Harnack's latest utterance on this subject in his published remarks on a letter of the Emperor of Germany, of date 15th February 1903, on the *Babel und Bibel* controversy. The Emperor had emphatically declared his belief that "Christ is God." Harnack, on his side, thinks that no injury is done to the peculiarity and uniqueness of Christ if He is placed in the line of other great men of the race (Moses, Isaiah, Socrates, etc.); but agrees that "the Christian community must reject every judgment on Christ which obliterates the distinction between Him and other masters." "Whether," he goes on, "the unbending formula 'Godhead of Christ' is the correct one, may and must be questioned." Even the ancient Church did not speak of the "Godhead" of Christ without qualification. In its sense the correct formula was "Godmanhood." Even this is not free from objection (the mystery of Christ's relation to the Father being impenetrable); but it may be allowed to remain, "because in reality it explains nothing, but, like the expression 'Son of God,' only shelters the extraordinary (in Christ) from profanation." The vagueness of this, as defining Christ's distinction from other members of the race, must be apparent.

THE PARISIAN SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY
"SYMBOLO-FIDÉISME"

VII

THE PARISIAN SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY "SYMBOLO-FIDÉISME" [1]

THE rise of a new school of theology in Paris is more than an accident; it is a symptom. It is the product of a tendency which has its origin in deeply-lying causes in the spirit of the age. On all sides—in Germany and Holland, in France and Switzerland, in America and in our own country—the evidences are unmistakable that a new theology is lifting up its head among us, and those interested in the future of the Church will do well to notice carefully whither it tends. The few articles in its creed are not difficult to define. A universal Father-God, whose presence fills the world and all human spirits; Jesus, the soul of the race, in whom the consciousness of the Father,

[1] *Esquisse d'une Philosophie de la Religion d'après la Psychologie et l'Histoire*, par Auguste Sabatier. Paris, 1897.

[*Outlines of a Philosophy of Religion, based on Psychology and History*, by A. Sabatier. London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1897].

Publications diverses sur le Fidéisme et son Application à l'Enseignement chrétien traditionnel, par Eugène Ménégoz. Paris, 1900.

and the corresponding spirit of filial love, first came to full realisation; the spirit of divine sonship learned from Jesus as the essence of religion and salvation—such in sum is the new theology. All else is dressing, disguise, *Aberglaube*, religious symbolism, inheritance of effete dogmatisms. Will this suffice for Christianity? It is this question which the Church of the immediate future will have to face, and meet with a very distinct "Yes" or "No."

The new French school which represents this tendency is specially connected with two names—those of Auguste Sabatier, whose decease since the publication of his *Esquisse* has to be chronicled with regret, and of Eugène Ménégoz, both of the Faculty of Theology in Paris. The personality of Sabatier was the real source of the influence of the school, and it is doubtful if, now his presence is withdrawn, it will long retain its prestige. The name "Symbolo-Fidéisme" by which its type of theology has come to be designated was originally given to it by a religious journal, but has been formally accepted by Prof. Ménégoz.[1] Its import will be seen as we proceed. Ménégoz was in the field far earlier than Sabatier (1869) with his thesis of salvation by faith, independently of beliefs; but it is Sabatier's volume to which we must look for the main exposition of the principles and fundamental ideas of the school.

[1] *Publications Diverses*, Pref., viii., p. 148. M. Lobstein, of Strassburg, on the other hand, declares "Symbolo-Fidéisme" to be "a phantom," and the "school of Paris" to be "a fiction."

Nothing, we confess, surprised us more than to find this volume of Sabatier's, at the time of its appearance, lauded by an orthodox Scotch critic as "one of the most powerful pieces of apologetic work Protestant theology has produced in recent years." After this we were prepared to find it described by its admirers as "an epoch-making book"—"a work of extraordinary interest"—"this master-work," and the like. Compliments of this sort glide readily from a friendly pen, and perhaps are not intended to be taken too literally. It would be a startling omen if they were; for it is indisputable that if the principles of this brilliant French *Esquisse* are to be admitted, the Church needs not only a new creed, but a new faith. We say this without prejudice to the many fine thoughts, exquisitely expressed, which the book contains. It has the true French grace and liveliness of style, and through it all there breathes the note of an absolute personal sincerity. Yet we cannot grant that the author's theories of psychology and philosophy—not to say of religion and dogma — are really profound. They impress and charm by the vivid, epigrammatic, declamatory form in which they are presented; but as a satisfactory solution of the deeper religious problems, they cannot be accepted for a moment.

The regret which the volume awakens is the keener that it was not so long before its publication that its author's attitude to Christianity was very different. The *Esquisse* is avowedly of the nature of a personal confession. It shows how, after a life-long conflict

between "the imperious desire of knowing, and the invincible need of believing and hoping"[1]—between the counter-instincts of science and religion — a tempest-tossed mind found repose in the view of Christianity which its pages expound. But even this avowal gives an imperfect idea of the magnitude and rapidity of the revolution accomplished in Sabatier's beliefs. When he began his professional career at Strassburg, it was as a strenuous defender of the evangelical verities.[2] This attitude continued after his removal to Paris. As lately as 1901 an English translation of his work on *The Apostle Paul* was published, to which he contributed a Preface. In this volume he still appears as a convinced defender of the

[1] *Esquisse*, p. 4.

[2] In 1863 he published *Le Temoignage de Jésus-Christ sur sa Personne*, and in 1866 an *Essai sur les Sources de la vie de Jésus*. In two letters published in connection with his candidature at Strassburg, he energetically proclaimed his entire faith, gained after many struggles, in the divinity and redemption of Jesus Christ. "This," he declared, "is the true point of separation between what is, and what is not, the Gospel. Is Jesus Christ only a man? Then, however great we may choose to make Him, Christianity loses its character of absolute truth and becomes a philosophy. If Jesus is the Son of God, Christianity remains a revelation. On this capital point, after long researches and serious reflections, I range myself on the side of the Apostles. . . . [I am not of] the school which calls Jesus Christ *Son of God*, but in the same sense as every Christian is; which speaks of *salvation* without believing in a real condemnation; of *redemption*, while admitting neither ransom nor redemption; of *authority* of the Bible, while recognising only that of conscience. . . . Revelation is for me the progressive and supernatural redemptive activity of God in history. . . . I am far removed from what you call the *new theology*," etc. (Cf. *Revue de Théologie*, May 1897.)

miraculous—of the apostle's supernatural conversion, of the resurrection of Jesus, etc.[1] Now, a few years later, all is changed. The modern evolutionary philosophy holds him in its thrall, and he will have no God but an immanent one, and no mode of His working but by continuous development. We can only glance at some of the leading ideas in the volume in which this remarkable revolution of opinion is announced.

The philosophy of religion, then, it is laid down in the Preface, can only have two sources—psychology and history.[2] Before we reach the close of the volume, however, we find that there is something more, to our mind even more determinative in the shaping of the theory—first, a Kantian doctrine of knowledge which, limiting knowledge to phenomena, destroys the possibility of a knowledge of God otherwise than in symbols; and second, the distinction, borrowed from Ritschl, of judgments of *existence* and judgments of *value* or dignity, and the placing of religious knowledge wholly in the latter.[3] From both arise what the author calls "the subjectivity of religious knowledge,"[4] and the contention that our religious ideas can be expressed only in symbol. To this doctrine of knowledge we shall return later, and meanwhile follow the author's order, which leads him to treat, first, of religion and

[1] Pp. 61, 67 (E. T.). A revised edition of the original work was published in 1896.

[2] *Esquisse*, Pref., xv.

[3] *Ibid.*, pp. 371-2 (E. T., p. 298-9). [In what follows, the references will be, where practicable, to the English Translation.]

[4] P. 303 (E. T.).

its origin; second, of Christianity and its essence; and third, of dogma and its nature. It is not necessary, in our rapid sketch, to keep the divisions too rigidly apart.

And first, on the origin of religion, there need be no quarrel with the root-principle of the author, that the ultimate fact of the religious consciousness—"impenetrable to analysis"—is "the mysterious and real coexistence of a particular cause, which is myself, and of a universal cause, which is God."[1] This immediate implication of the human spirit with God might seem a sufficient origin for the religious sentiment; but, instead, we have a psychological theory of the genesis of religion from the collisions of man with the outward world. The contradiction in which primitive man finds himself involved with nature throws back the ego on itself in pain; "sparks soon fly, and the inner life of the ego is lit up"[2] in consciousness; from this initial contradiction springs religion as the solution. "It is the rent in the rock through which the living and life-giving waters flow."[3] Religion, thus originated, thereafter, like a divine flower, unfolds itself according to internal laws. In nature it is imperishable. "Religious beliefs do not die, they are simply transformed."[4] Its essence is *prayer*—not words, but inward surrender to the principle on which it feels itself dependent. This movement of the soul to God is at the same time God's revelation in the soul—"*Quid interius Deo?*"—and there is no other. All

[1] P. 346; *cf.* p. 66 (E. T.).
[2] P. 15 (E. T.).
[3] P. 21 (E. T.).
[4] P. 26 (E. T).

religion involves revelation, from which it follows that "the revelation of God never needs to be proved to any one."[1] "There are not, and could never have been, two revelations different in nature, and opposed to each other."[2] Yet the course of revelation is allowed to have been marked, as, indeed, the barest inspection of the history of religion shows, by the rankest overgrowths of superstition and error. In the Old Testament, revelation, at first as elsewhere mythological, becomes gradually interior and moral, without, however, thereby becoming in any way miraculous, and "this evolution appears to have been completed in the soul of Christ."[3] Miracle, in the ordinary sense, Sabatier utterly rejects, though, as we shall see below, he defines evolution in terms that might well leave the door open for it—almost necessitate it. That which makes belief in miracle possible is "ignorance of nature and its laws."[4] Revelation and inspiration are simply names for religious genius. "In the great prophets of Israel, the formula *Thus saith the Lord* . . . has become a simple rhetorical formula. God speaks henceforth to His people by their eloquence, by their faith, by their genius."[5] "Thus understood, religious inspiration does not differ psychologically from poetic inspiration. It presents the same mystery, but it is not more miraculous."[6]

[1] P. 357 (E. T.). [2] P. 64 (E. T.). [3] P. 41 (E. T.).
[4] P. 71 (E. T.). [5] P. 41 (E. T.).
[6] P. 89 (E. T.). *Cf.* Ménégoz, *ut supra*, pp. 122 ff., 163-4, 302, etc.

Passing next to Christianity, our author has no difficulty in informing us wherein its essence lies. Its "principle and essence" are found in that filial spirit toward God, which in its perfect form is the distinctive and original feature of the piety of Jesus.[1] The religious distinction of Jesus lies in the fact that "He felt Himself to be in a filial relation towards God, and He felt that God was in a paternal relation toward Him," and "that which we observe in the consciousness of Jesus we find in the experience of all Christians—they are Christians exactly in proportion as the filial piety of Jesus is reproduced in them."[2] Jesus Himself, while perfectly realising the filial spirit, is, in contrariety with all that Sabatier at an earlier stage contended for, no more than man. The value to be attached to His views of God and of divine things will naturally depend on our estimate of the intellectual dress He gave to His experiences; and it is made abundantly evident that He was in error in many vital respects, *e.g.*, in regard to His own Second Advent, which was a mistaken belief borrowed from current Messianic notions.[3]

Finally, we come to the consideration of dogma. Religion, it has been shown, begins in a life, in a peculiar constitution of individuality, and this life clothes itself in intellectual conceptions suitable to its stage of development. Thus arises "dogma," the variable element in religion, as "piety" is the con-

[1] P. 140 (E. T.). [2] Pp. 148-9 (E. T.).
[3] P. 192 (E. T.).

stant element. In dogma there is nothing absolute. It is with dogmas as with all living things; "they are in a perpetual state of transformation,"[1] the material of which they are composed "is in a state of constant flux and evolution."[2] Even as regards Christ, "neither in His language nor in His thought is there anything absolute."[3] "He promulgates no law or dogma."[4] Yet in some vague sense dogma is held to be essential to religion. "One cannot conceive either dogma without a Church, or a Church without dogma."[5] "A religion without doctrine, a piety without thought, a feeling without expression, these things are essentially contradictory."[6] "Dogma is absolutely necessary to the propagation and edification of the religious life."[7] "By suppressing Christian dogma you would suppress Christianity, by discarding all religious doctrine you would destroy religion."[8] Nay, in almost verbal inconsistency with the above—as if the author felt that in this volatilising of religion everything definite was escaping him—it is affirmed that "Christianity, in its pure essence, implies the absoluteness of God, that is to say, His perfect spirituality and His perfect independence;"[9] that the "variability" of dogma is "not unlimited," but "is necessarily confined within limits which, while not easy to define theoretically, are none the less precise and

[1] P. 231 (E. T.). [2] P. 252 (E. T.). [3] P. 166 (E. T.).
[4] P. 152 (E. T.). [5] P. 229 (E. T.). [6] P. 336 (E. T.).
[7] P. 242 (E. T.). [8] P. 249 (E. T.). [9] P. 172 (E. T.).

fixed."[1] We are not wrong, however, in saying that the controlling idea of the book is that of the perpetual "flux," the essential "transformability" of dogma, and that no phase of dogma can be regarded as of more than passing importance.[2]

It would be difficult in brief space to disengage the threads of truth from those of error in the type of religious philosophy thus cursorily sketched. Is Sabatier's account of the genesis of religion, *e.g.* a tenable one? Does the primitive mind really experience this sense of contradiction, or is it thrown into this agony of pain in presence of nature, and is religion born, like sparks struck from flint, from this collision of inward and outward, as a result of the instinct of self-preservation? Is the child-like attitude not rather originally one of union with nature, and is religion in its purest form not born in stillness? Then what is this "religion" which assumes such infinitely protean forms, yet remains one and the same and indestructible through all? Even if we could abstract the common essence of phenomena so diverse, what would the residuum be worth? And what sense can we attach to the unity of a "revelation" covering the whole range of religious history between fetishism and Christianity? Sabatier depreciates the intellectual element in religion in comparison with the indestructible essence, yet he himself makes religion originate in the flashing in on man's mind of the consciousness that it is

[1] P. 334 (E. T.). [2] *Cf.* p. 8 (E. T.).

a *spiritual* principle on which he and the universe depend—that is, he gives idea the lead. And if each stage of religion has its appropriate intellectual vesture, and Christianity is the absolute stage, how can it avoid having its appropriate intellectual vesture also, which, as is granted above, can only vary within limits. Dogma in that case is *not* an absolutely fluent and variable thing. Then is it the case—and here the difference becomes vital—that religion has the power of unfolding all forms, up even to the highest, from its bosom by inherent laws of development? For it does not alter the character of the development to say that God is immanent in it—as, indeed, He is in everything: in the act of thinking, or breathing, or lifting the arm—in a sense, even in the act of will by which a man sins. The old scholastic doctrine of the *concursus* recognised the immanence in all these acts quite as effectually as Sabatier does. Especially, we ask, Does immanent, non-miraculous development suffice to explain the religion of the Bible, and especially of Christianity? Is it an adequate "apologetic" to recognise Jesus as the last term and crown of a process of universal religious evolution? We trow not. One thing more we must notice, namely, that while Sabatier has much to say of the necessary persistence and sure evolution of religion, he has hardly a word for the glaring and awful fact of *ir*-religion. Is it the case that in the true sense of the word men are inevitably and universally religious? Religious susceptibilities

they have, but is there not the possibility of choking these by a life of worldliness and sin—nay, of developing a positive hate and defiance of God? It is surely remarkable that in a book professing to treat of Christianity next to no account is taken of sin or of God's relation to it. Nor does Sabatier mend the matter when, in a Preface replying to criticisms, he boldly avows that sin is a necessity for man by his creation; accepts determinism. It is due to Prof. Ménégoz to say that on this point he has a much more positive utterance to give.[1]

The key to Sabatier's theory is to be found, as indicated above, in the continuous struggle in his nature between heart and reason—between religious need and the claim upon his intellect of a scientific view of the world. The ruling conception in the latter he finds to be that of unbroken evolution; at this shrine, accordingly, he is content to sacrifice the distinctively supernatural in history and religion, substituting for it the idea of an immanent action of God in nature and the spirit of man. But he does not really solve the problem with which he set out, of effecting a reconciliation between Christianity and reigning scientific conceptions. This is manifest both on the religious and on the scientific side. On the religious

[1] In a review of Sabatier's volume, Prof. Ménégoz says: "In what respects the foundation, my reserve relates to what I regard as the too slight place (*le rôle trop effacé*) given to sin in the genesis of religion. Man has not only to contend with nature that threatens to crush him, but with God Himself who condemns the sinner" (*ut supra*, p. 234).

side, it is essential to his theory, not only that man should know himself dependent on a spiritual principle immanent in all things, but that he should cognise this principle as a loving, gracious Father, with whom he can stand in relations of perfect trust and fellowship, to whom he can pray, and who responds to his prayer with needed help and blessing. But not to speak of the impossibility of arriving on a natural basis at the knowledge and certainty requisite for such a relation, it must be pointed out that all this spiritual *rapport* — this supernatural transacting in giving and receiving between the soul and a loving Heavenly Father—is as effectually excluded by the rigid scientific view of the world, and as inharmonious with it, as were the old ideas of revelation and inspiration. On the scientific side, again, while Sabatier doubtless believes himself to be taking over in its integrity the modern doctrine of evolution, it is certain that he does not do so. His evolution theory is not that of Darwin, or Huxley, or Spencer, or Haeckel, who evolve the higher by natural laws from forces inherent in the lower; but a theory which places the living God in the heart of nature as the force impelling its whole upward and onward movement, and imparting to it in its ascent higher and richer potencies. "At each step," we hear him saying, "Nature surpasses itself by a mysterious creation that resembles a true miracle in relation to an inferior stage. What, then, shall we conclude from these observations, except that in nature there is a

hidden force, an immeasurable 'potential energy,' an ever-open, never exhausted fount of apparitions, at once magnificent and unexpected."[1] On this hypothesis, in fact, the antithesis between "special creation" and "evolution" tends to disappear; what are virtually special creations—new apparitions—are taken up into evolution as phases of it. Sabatier draws from his theory the conclusion that miracles do *not* occur in history. Other representatives of the new theology, *e.g.*, Dr Lyman Abbott, see more logically that on this hypothesis the door is open for any number of miracles. There is no *a priori* reason why the Power continually manifesting itself in usual ways should not, if need arises, manifest itself in unusual ways.[2] The conception is a sound one; but it is certainly as foreign to the thorough-going scientific view of nature to which we are asked to become reconciled, as was the older view of a "redemptive activity" of God in history which Sabatier abandoned for its sake. Neither Sabatier nor Ménégoz admits any action of God outside of natural law, yet their theories are surcharged with elements that can find no justification within a purely natural scheme.

It is now time to return to that peculiar view of the relation of religion to dogma[3] which has

[1] P. 84 (E. T.). [2] *Theology of an Evolutionist*, p. 141.

[3] Sabatier uses this word in the sense of a doctrine stamped by church authority, and enforced as law, but his theory really applies to all doctrine, whether "dogma" in this narrower sense or not. Ménégoz speaks commonly of "beliefs" (*croyances*).

procured for the theology of this school its uncouth designation — "Symbolo-Fidéisme." Of the two ideas combined in this title, Sabatier stands sponsor for the one, Ménégoz for the other.[1] Sabatier develops the notion that our religious conceptions are always and only *symbols;* Ménégoz lays stress on the thought that the central religious act of the soul is *faith.* By faith, however, in this connection, he will have us understand only the act of the soul in turning to God in surrender, with exclusion of every doctrinal or intellectual element. It is not denied that beliefs may and should accompany faith; but the saving element is the faith, which may subsist in independence of beliefs —even of belief in God and Christ.[2] The message of the Reformation was, "salvation by faith alone, without works"; the message of *Fidéisme* to the modern age is "salvation by faith, independently of beliefs."[3] This is supposed to be the needed modern reading of the Pauline doctrine of justification by faith. It is paralleled by the contention of Sabatier, that the essence of religion lies in the sentiment or movement of the soul laying hold of

[1] See note at end of Essay.

[2] *Ut supra*, pp. 47, 48.

[3] *Ibid.*, Pref., vi., p. 47, and constantly. A large part of the book is taken up with rebutting alleged misconceptions of this principle, as in the form sometimes given to it, that faith is independent of beliefs. Yet at bottom it is difficult to see what else the principle can mean. No one denies that knowledge alone does not save, but only as it is accompanied by faith of the heart.

God in prayer, while the idea which springs from this sentiment, and forms its imaginative envelope, is secondary. It is surely apparent that there is here an attempt to separate elements which are inseparable in fact. The stranger thing is that, holding this view of the secondary and non-essential character of doctrine or dogma, these writers should insist so strongly as they do on the legitimacy, and even necessity, of dogma. Religion, the inner sentiment, must give itself some outward clothing or embodiment in idea — this we can understand. But Sabatier goes much further, and insists, as we have seen, that the Church must not only have doctrines, but have "dogmas," which are forms of doctrine imposed by authority.[1] But if dogmas are, as alleged, at best symbols; if they do not enter into the essence of religion; if they are in constant flux, and are incapable of enduring; why, in the name of all that is rational, should any right be recognised in the Church to adopt or impose them? Why should not each believer be left in entire liberty to frame such symbols of his faith as may please himself? With all his skill, it is difficult for Sabatier here to avoid falling into contradictions. If in one breath he declares it to be "perfectly irrational to talk of a religion without dogma and without worship," and "proclaims the necessity for a Church of formulating its faith into a doctrine";[2] in the next he says, "We simply say that there is

[1] See above, p. 164. [2] P. 250 (E. T.).

nothing absolute in them, nothing that may be imposed by authority on Christian thought."[1] Yet his very definition of dogma implies "an element of authority." "Dogma is a doctrine of which the Church has made a law."[2]

That dogma in itself—*i.e.*, as pure intellectual formulation—has no saving virtue, every one will admit. Whether, on the other hand, the Church has a right to define its faith, and to require assent to at least its fundamental doctrines, as a condition of communion, is a question that will be differently answered according to the reply given to a prior question—Has the Church a faith to define? On the theory of perpetual "flux" and unlimited "transformality" of dogma, it seems plain it has not. No Church ever did, or would, frame "dogmas," except on the assumption that it possessed a measure of abiding truth, for which it was called upon to bear witness. We have seen, however, that, when brought to the point, Sabatier does not carry out his theory to its logical consequences, but concedes that there is a content in Christianity which does *not* vary; therefore that there are limits, difficult to define, but precise and fixed, to the variability of its dogmas. Ménégoz would say the same. The Christianity which these writers would leave us may be meagre enough. Ménégoz gives a re-statement of certain Christian doctrines. Even in Jesus he can see no more than "the manifestation, the most pure and complete, of

[1] P. 252 (E. T.). [2] P. 230 (E. T.).

the conscience of humanity."[1] But an important principle is affirmed when it is declared that Christianity has *some* doctrine of God, man, and salvation which does not vary. Whatever the essential content of Christianity, it must always be the business of the Church to seek it out, and give it the purest and most adequate expression of which it is capable. In this labour, if there is an element that varies with time and place, there is also something that can be relied on to abide.

More serious results follow from the other element in this "Symbolo-Fidéisme" theory, to which we now turn—the view, viz., that all doctrine is simply "symbol." To gain light on this, it is necessary to give attention to Sabatier's theory of knowledge, postponed, as we saw, till near the end of his volume. Had the theory of knowledge stood at the beginning instead of at the end of his exposition, as even Ménégoz thinks it should,[2] it is probable that it would have led readers to be more cautious in the acceptance of certain of his positions. For what is the theory? It is, in a word, the Kantian doctrine that the mind knows only the world of phenomena under the forms and categories which itself supplies. The supersensible it cannot know, but can only represent to itself in symbol. It was before explained how the mind strikes out the idea of God under the pressure of its practical necessities. It is now shown that this idea, subjective in origin,

[1] *Ut supra*, p. 46. [2] *Ut supra*, p. 234.

is likewise symbolical in form. In Ritschlian parlance, it is not a judgment of existence, but a judgment of estimation—of value.[1] And the judgment is symbolic. The author must speak for himself on this subject. "The reason," he says, "is easy to discover. The object of religion is transcendent, it is not a phenomenon. Now, in order to express that object our imagination has nothing at its disposal but phenomenal images, and our understanding logical categories, which do not go beyond space and time. Religious knowledge is therefore obliged to express the invisible by the visible, the eternal by the temporal, spiritual realities by sensible images. It can only speak in parables. The theory of religious knowledge requires for its completion a theory of symbols and symbolism. . . . It would be an illusion to believe that a religious symbol represents God in Himself, and that its value therefore depends on the exactitude with which it represents Him. The true content of the symbol is entirely subjective; it is the conscious relation of the subject to

[1] Ménégoz dissents from this formula of Sabatier, but only to the extent of substituting "essence" for "existence."—*La Théologie de l'Epître aux Hebreux*, p. 129. The Ritschlian affinity of the French school is affirmed by Ménégoz in the following terms:—"Observe what is happening in Germany. One after another the Faculties of Theology are separating themselves from the old theology and the old rationalism, and are entering, with shades of difference, into the theological movement to which Ritschl has given his name, the doctrines of which, while not to be confounded with ours, yet approach them on the chief points."—*Pub. Div.*, p. 236.

God, or rather it is the way he feels himself affected by God."[1]

It will probably be felt that, taken in connection with the general theory, these are very far-reaching assertions. In light of them, the doctrine as a whole may be thus summed up: that while ideas are indispensable to religion, and must be allowed to vary as higher and lower, the highest as well as the lowest are only imaginative envelopes or vestures of religious feeling, have no independent value as knowledge, are fleeting, and, as under the laws of evolution, in constant process of transformation. In its application to Christianity the theory teaches, that, even in their best and purest form, the religious ideas we possess are but symbols of the invisible—more truly, of the unknowable. For that of which we have no knowledge save through the dim symbols our minds may form in gratification of some aspiration, is not, in the real sense of the word, "known" at all. We have no means of comparing the symbol evolved from our subjective need with the reality, or of testing how far they correspond.

In forming a judgment on a theory so startling, it is important that we should, at the outset, recognise the element of truth which it contains. For it has undeniably its element of truth. It is the case that a large symbolical factor enters, and must enter, into our knowledge of God and of divine things.

[1] Pp. 323-27 (E. T.)

This follows from the circumstance that we are dealing with an infinite Being, whose nature, attributes, and modes of operation we can only represent to ourselves by the help of analogies drawn from our own consciousness and experience. There is no absolute knowledge of God — no pure *Begriff*, such as Hegel speaks of. The element of *Vorstellung* cleaves to all our thoughts. For the same reason, it is to be conceded that, within certain limits, our religious conceptions are liable to growth, change, purification, enlargement — it may be, degeneration. But this is only one side of the matter. The error of the symbolic theory does not lie in its affirming that our knowledge of God, and of divine and spiritual things, is necessarily largely symbolical. It lies in its affirming that *all* our knowledge is of this sort; that there is nothing in our knowledge of God that is not symbol. This is a proposition which cannot be sustained. It brings us back to the old doctrine of "regulative truths," and really amounts to the affirmation, that God in Himself is unknowable. Against it, it must be contended that we may have —in the Christian religion do have — a knowledge of God which in its central and essential part is true, in the sense of agreeing with reality. A symbolical element enters into all our knowledge, but the thought that lies at the heart of our conception—which forms the kernel of it—is not symbol, but stands for a perfectly clear idea, of the truth of which we are convinced. Take, for example, the proposition—

"God knows all things." It is plain that of the *mode* of God's knowing I can only form a symbolical and inadequate conception. *How* God knows, the manner of His knowing, is beyond my comprehension. But this necessity of employing symbol, analogy, figure, to set forth the *mode* of God's knowing, does not cast the least doubt on the central point in the assertion—that God *does* know; or deprive me of the power of making a perfectly clear and intelligible affirmation on that head. I understand precisely what I mean when I say that God is not unconscious, that He has intelligence, that He holds in His mind a perfect knowledge of all that is, that all things are naked and open before Him. It is not different with the other assertions I may make about God—for instance, that He is *love*. Here also there is room and need for symbol; but the central assertion itself is free from ambiguity and figure. Nor is it merely a relative conception; for here, if anywhere, I touch absoluteness; this is what God in His very essence *is*.

It is not the case, therefore, that all our knowledge of God is to be resolved into mere symbol, or is necessarily fluctuating and changing. Through and behind the symbol shines the reality which the mind truly apprehends. The kernel of the truth we may feel that we securely grasp. Much depends on this distinction. To say with Sabatier that the object of religion is in Himself unknowable; that the content of the symbol is entirely subjective; that the judgment we form regarding God is not

one of existence, but only of estimation; that it is not God Himself, but the relation of the subject to God, or rather the way in which the subject feels himself affected by God, — in a word, to affirm, in this sense, the thorough-going "subjectivity of religious knowledge,"—is, as already said, to take the ground from religious knowledge altogether. All we can ever reach is imaginative symbol, subjective in colouring, changing with the changing years. Religion could never subsist on such a basis as that. Jesus teaches us, for instance, that God is our Heavenly Father. That is a truth of infinite value, if only we can rely on it. But if this is only a symbol, first in Christ's consciousness, then in ours, to represent we know not really what, —if Fatherhood is only our human way of symbolising the ultimate Power in the universe, whose real nature we can never ascertain, we are in very different case. Happily religion is not left in this helpless condition. "We know what we worship."[1] How much or how little our knowledge of God will include — in other words, what material exists for doctrine — depends on the content of the revelation. On the Sabatier-Ménégoz theory of Jesus and His religion, that knowledge is perhaps small; on a wider view of what God has discovered of Himself in His providence and grace, and to the fathers through the prophets, till the consummation of His revelation in the Son, it may include a great deal.

[1] John iv. 22.

Additional Note

Symbolo-Fidéisme. — The following passage, from a review by Ménégoz of Sabatier's book, may throw further light on the sense in which this title is employed. The review is headed "A Theological Event," and is included in the *Publications Diverses* (pp. 227 *ff.*): — "For nearly twenty years I have wrought with M. Sabatier in our Faculty, and have lived in contact with his thought. I have watched his development; he has watched mine; we have progressed together. Though starting from different points of view, we have met. My Lutheran education had placed me on the soil of the material principle of Protestantism, at the heart of the dogma of justification by faith, and I have ended with the doctrine of salvation by *faith*, independently of *beliefs*, to which I have given the name of *Fidéisme*. By his Reformed education, my colleague found himself placed on a soil where the formal principle of Protestantism was accentuated; the questions which have occupied him are those of authority, of method, of the principles of religious knowledge; and, having come to recognise the essential difference between the religious substance of the Christian faith and its form, wholly

contingent and symbolical, he has concluded with what he has called *Critical Symbolism.* Thus the formal principle and the material principle of Protestantism are harmonised in *Symbolo-Fidéisme"* (p. 228).

DR McGIFFERT ON APOSTOLIC CHRISTIANITY

VIII

DR McGIFFERT ON APOSTOLIC CHRISTIANITY[1]

We confess to no little disappointment with this new book of Dr McGiffert's. The author had previously given us an edition of the *Ecclesiastical History of Eusebius* for which we were justly grateful. The scholarship, acumen, and good sense displayed in that valuable work gave hope of a handling of the phenomena of the apostolic age which would mark a true advance in our knowledge. In his more recent *Inaugural Address* Prof. McGiffert showed that he had come under the influence of the newer Harnackian ideas to an extent which awakened some apprehensions. But we were certainly not prepared for so radical and revolutionary a production as this

[1] *A History of Christianity in the Apostolic Age*, by Arthur Cushman McGiffert, Ph.D., D.D., Washburn Professor of Church History in the Union Theological Seminary, New York. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1897, $2.50 net; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark.

The Presbyterian and Reformed Review, April 1898. [See note in Preface.]

new volume of "The International Theological Library" proves to be. Dr McGiffert says in his Preface that his aim throughout "has been positive, not negative, constructive, not destructive." We fully believe it; but his work is destructive all the same—destructive of most received notions on the subjects he is treating of—and his construction is of a sort which will cause many not over-conservative people to shake their heads. Had the work come from the study of one of the German theologians Dr McGiffert loves so much to quote, there would have been little occasion to marvel at its contents. But the views it propounds are surprising as coming from a sober professor of a Presbyterian seminary in America—above all from the successor of the lamented Dr Schaff. Their publication is, however, a distinct sign of the times. They are a reflection of the new learning on the continent of Europe. It is characteristic of this volume that references to the old writers and authorities—especially in English — are discarded, and that the pages bristle with references to newer men like Harnack, Weizsäcker, Schürer, Wendt, Jülicher, Holtzmann, Spitta, etc. The chief English writers referred to are Ramsay, Briggs, Bruce—occasionally Lightfoot. And the volume is a sign of the new drift and tendency of theology among ourselves. It represents a phase or trend in theology which the churches may be sure that they will have soon to reckon with. We hear occasionally of movements for the revision of the Confession. But

if Dr McGiffert is right, the only proper thing to do is to revise the Confession off the face of the earth. There is no longer any basis left for its characteristic doctrines—the bulk of them, in fact, are shown to be far aside from the Gospel, if not a positive travesty of it. The new treatment does not simply modify our existing conceptions—it knocks the bottom out of them.

We can fancy, however, that Dr McGiffert will not be greatly moved by any dangers that may threaten the traditional orthodoxy as a result of his inquiries. Nor is there any use complaining of his freedoms. The main question after all is, Are his views true? If they are, the Church must shift for itself as best it can. Only, it is a fair demand that before it is asked to haul down its flag, it should have very strong and conclusive reasons furnished to it. Does Dr McGiffert afford us these? Our belief is he does not. There are various questions here. One is, What is the picture of the apostolic age furnished by the sources, and does Dr McGiffert's picture answer to that? This we believe must be answered in the negative. The picture of the sources we think we can understand. There is a clearness and consistency about it. But Dr McGiffert's picture we cannot understand. To our mind it lacks verisimilitude; it lacks coherence with itself; above all, we hold it is not true to its professed basis. It is only made good by setting aside piecemeal the natural testimony of the records, and substituting for it

arbitrary hypotheses of the author's own. A second question would be, Is the picture of the sources historical? Does it, with reasonable or substantial accuracy (we shall for argumentative purposes ask no more), represent the course of events? We claim that it does; and if it does, Dr McGiffert's theory, so far as it falls asunder from it, must be condemned. And a third question is, What is the value of this picture to *us?* What view of Jesus, or of His work, or of His Gospel, or of apostolic teaching on these subjects, does it afford on which humanity may rely as truth for *itself?* We do not want simply to know what men—even apostles, or the early Church—thought or believed about Christ. We want to know really who or what Christ is, what He has done for men, and whether the beliefs entertained by apostles and early believers were true and valid for the ages. We want, in short, firm footing on which we ourselves can stand—not quagmire. And the question is, whether Dr McGiffert's representations give us such ground.

While speaking thus plainly, we desire to say that we do not for a moment question the great ability displayed in Dr McGiffert's work, or deny that the reading of it may prove stimulating and suggestive. The same may be said of very many works — as Baur's or Weizsäcker's—from whose general views we decidedly dissent. Compared with some continental treatises, Dr McGiffert's book may even boast to be in some measure conservative. The author claims in

his Preface, *e.g.*, to be moderately conservative in relation to the sources. He is at one with Harnack, he says, "in the conviction that 2 Peter is the only really pseudonymous work in the New Testament," and "in the treatment of the Book of Acts as based in the main upon trustworthy sources." The Pauline epistles are accepted as genuine,[1] with the exception of the Pastoral epistles, and even these are regarded as based on genuine Pauline letters. Mark is a genuine gospel of that writer, and Matthew's Gospel is founded on *Logia* of the apostle. Luke's Gospel and the Book of Acts, on the other hand, though generally quoted as "Luke," are not by Paul's companion, but originate late in the century—the Book of Acts probably in the reign of Domitian. The "we" passages are possibly, but not certainly, by Luke. It is to be observed, further, that while "pseudonymity" is disclaimed for the epistles of James and 1 Peter, these are not regarded as writings of the authors to whom they are commonly assigned. They are later productions, and the names of James and Peter are probably interpolations. These and other critical dicta will be glanced at after: we are more concerned at present with the use the author makes of his sources even as described by himself. This we shall find to be sufficiently arbitrary. For the rest, the plan of the book is good, and the working out of the details, whatever we may think of

[1] This is so, even though Rom. xvi. is regarded as an epistle to Ephesus and 2 Cor. x.-xiii. as the lost *third* epistle to the Corinthians.

the results, is painstaking and full. The body or central part of the book—about half of the whole—is occupied with the Christianity and labours and journeyings of the apostle Paul—and so far as this can be detached from the general view of the apostle's gospel which underlies it, it is often informatory and suggestive—transports us, at least, into the midst of the most recent discussions on the subject, those, *e.g.*, of Prof. Ramsay.[1] The book has thus its literary, historical, and theological merits, which we would not seek to minimise. When, however, we come to deal with the fundamental theories and methods of the volume, and with its general outcome as a picture of the Church in the apostolic age, we are compelled to separate ourselves from it almost *in toto*.

An edifice is not stronger than its foundations. Christianity rests on Christ. What then does Dr McGiffert think of Christ? To get at his views on this subject we must begin a little further back. The first section of the chapter on "The Origin of Christianity"—all too brief for the weight that is afterwards rested on it—is on Judaism. This gives us already a foretaste of the author's principles of treatment; we do not, however, delay further on it than to call attention to one or two points bearing on the after discussion. In accordance with the tendencies at present prevailing, the later theological beliefs of the Jews, like the Levitical law, are represented as

[1] Prof. Ramsay has replied on his own behalf in *The Expositor* for January 1898.

the natural development of the religious consciousness of the people under the influence of their exilian and post-exilian experiences. Thus arose, *e.g.*, ideas of individual responsibility, of resurrection and judgment, eschatological views of the kingdom of God—above all, the expectation of the Messianic King. "That expectation," we are told, "was not universal, and did not constitute a part of the original Messianic hope."[1] (A "Messianic hope" without a "Messiah" surely savours of paradox.) With the rise of the Levitical law—also a human development—a change took place in the idea of righteousness. The purity aimed at was less ethical than physical: moral principles tended to be lost sight of "under the pressure of the constant and anxious care required to maintain ceremonial cleanness and to restore it when violated"; observance of the law "led not unnaturally to the substitution of hard and cold formalism for the heart-service of the prophets." The result was a further change in the idea of the covenant, which now was viewed as a piece of hard bargaining—"the nation bound to observe the law given by God; God to pay the promised recompense in proportion to its performance."[2] Our point is that, so far as appears, the law was not in reality a "law given by God" at all; and that the Messianic hopes and ideals rested as little on any divine revelation, but were conceptions evolved by the nation's own mind in the

[1] P. 8. [2] Pp. 3-5.

situation in which it was placed. We might question, too, were this the place for it, whether the prevailing type of piety, *i.e.*, in really religious circles, was, till the later Pharisaic period, nearly so legalistic as is here represented. Those who think with Dr McGiffert have a hard nut to crack in the existing Psalter, which, on their view, was, in its bulk, a creation of this very period.[1]

The link between the Old Testament and Jesus is John the Baptist. Here we get further light on Dr McGiffert's views and methods. His estimate of John the Baptist varies widely from the common one, and is distinctly low. We gain from it an instructive glimpse of what we shall have occasion to emphasise all through — the arbitrary subjectivism of his treatment of the sources. By this we mean the method, learned from his German masters, of setting aside at pleasure what is told in the records, and substituting for it some view based on subjective considerations. This view, accepted as fact, is then

[1] Dr McGiffert himself refers in a footnote to Psalms i., xix., cxix., as indicative of a higher strain. But is not the whole Psalter based on a higher key than that which he supposes? Where is the predominating zeal for the "Levitical law" or for ceremonial rites as the expressions of holiness? Would one gather from the Psalter that there was a Levitical law at all, or be able to form any idea of its nature? Are not the indications as slight, to say the least, as in the earlier historical and prophetical books? Should not the critics, in very consistency, either (1) put the Psalms back to pre-Levitical times; or (2) make the law still later than the Psalms—bring it down, say, to a century or two before Christ; or (3) give up the argument that the absence of allusion means the absence of the existence of the law?

not infrequently made the basis of further critical operations. All our Gospels, *e.g.*, represent John as the divinely prepared forerunner of the Messiah. In two of the Gospels (Matthew and John, the latter in a context accepted by Dr McGiffert as genuine),[1] the claim is put into John's own mouth. John's teaching of the impending appearance of the Mightier than himself, and of his personal inferiority to Him, the contrast of his own ineffectual water-baptism with the Messiah's Spirit-baptism, imply, if words can do it, the same thing. The distinct declaration by John of his divine commission, his recognition of Christ at the baptism, etc.,[2] are main features of the narrative. But Dr McGiffert knows better. John did not claim to be a forerunner of the Messiah; his conceptions were not based on any special revelation; nor had he any personal knowledge of Jesus (the narrative makes them cousins): he simply voiced the common Messianic expectations of his time, and his work made no deep or lasting impression. The later doubt of John[3] is held sufficient to discredit the narratives of the Baptist's earlier testimony to Jesus.[4] Very different, surely, was the estimate of Jesus of His faithful forerunner and his work.[5] But Dr McGiffert thinks himself warranted in putting all this aside—nor, to do him justice, do we see how he could have retained it, and squared it with his after estimate of the Son of Man Himself.

[1] P. 11. [2] John i. 25-34; Matt. iii. 14.
[3] Matt. xi. 3-6. [4] P. 11. [5] Matt. xi. 9-15.

For this is to us the central and crucial point in the judgment to be formed of the book before us —the estimate it gives of Jesus. Here we come to foundations. Everything in our conception of Christianity depends on what we suppose Jesus Himself to be. And we can only express our surprise and disappointment at the utterances on this subject which meet us in the pages of Prof. McGiffert. Jesus was "a unique, religious Personality"—and Baur, Pfleiderer, Renan, Martineau, Weizsäcker, would, we suppose, say as much. Given this fundamental fact, everything else proceeds, apparently, by psychological evolution. The miraculous birth and the incidents of the infancy are, of course, passed over, though the story of the visit to the temple in His twelfth year is accepted—on what principle of selection it is not easy to see. By that time the "epoch-making conviction" had already come to Jesus that God was His Father—not simply the Father of the Jewish nation, but His own. This "can find its ultimate explanation only in His own unique religious Personality."[1] He grew up sharing the Messianic hopes of those about Him. "There can be little doubt, then, that Jesus, like so many of His compatriots, including John himself, was looking for the speedy establishment of the Messianic kingdom": and "that He should enroll Himself among John's disciples and receive baptism at his hands, was the most natural thing in the

[1] P. 16.

world"[1]—the most natural thing in the world that Jesus should receive a "baptism of repentance"! It was in connection with this baptism that Jesus is supposed to have received the first "revelation" of His own Messiahship—meaning that at this stage He somehow "reached that conviction."[2] In the temptation He rejected the false ideals of his countrymen, but from this time firmly "believed Himself to be the Messiah of the prophets" (who did *not* predict a Messiah), and proclaimed the approach of the kingdom for which all were looking.[3] Yet His conception of the kingdom differed from the ordinary one in that He viewed it as a present reality (though also future), and placed the essence of its blessedness in "the realisation on man's part of his filial relation to his Father God."[4] The "spirit of sonship" is the supreme condition of entrance into the kingdom.[5] In the beginning of His ministry "Jesus said nothing of the necessity of coming into fellowship with Himself,"[6] and even later His "emphasis of faith in or acceptance of Himself is throughout an emphasis not of His Personality, but of His message, and thus simply a reassertion of filial trust in, devotion to, and service of God, as the essential and sufficient condition of

[1] P. 17. [2] Pp. 17, 22. [3] P. 19. [4] P. 20.

[5] Pp. 25, 27. Christ said: "Blessed are *the poor in spirit*, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven," but nowhere makes "a true spirit of sonship" the condition of entrance into His kingdom. This is a blessing *within* the kingdom.

[6] P. 28.

an eternal life of blessedness with God in heaven."[1] In regard to the Jewish law, we are informed, Jesus took up a strictly conservative attitude. It was to Him "a divine law as truly as to any of His countrymen" (we saw that really it was not so—at least the Levitical part of it), and "it never seems to have occurred to Him that the time would yet come for its abrogation."[2] Obedience to it was included in the duty of sonship, and His complaint against the Pharisees was that they observed it not too much, but too little.[3] This obedience embraced the Levitical ritual, but in placing, as He did, the *principle* of obedience in love to God and love to man, He gave emphasis to the moral elements, and was able to realise a large measure of liberty, even under the law.[4] Unless we mistake Dr McGiffert, Jesus, in this relation to the law, stood on a lower level than some even of the prophets, who did not scruple to speak very scathingly of the worthlessness of ceremonial rites as a means of pleasing God. Jesus, at any rate, is conceived to have been a strict Jew in practice, and not to have contemplated any change in the future. The time when the law should be abolished "did not come during Jesus' life, and He gave no clear indication that he expected it ever to come." It is conceded, however, that "the subsequent history of Christianity would not have been what it was had not His

[1] P. 30. [2] Pp. 25, 26.
[3] P. 25. [4] P. 26.

principles made its coming possible."[1] This at least is something—Jesus made a universalistic Christianity *possible.*

Jesus' own conviction that "He was the one who had been promised by the prophets and long awaited by the fathers,"[2] he succeeded in imparting to His followers, and this was the pivot of His success. His early views did not necessarily include the foresight of His death. It was not long, however, before He saw that the hostility of the authorities must eventuate in His execution. But this made it inevitable, unless He were to give up His belief in His own Messiahship, "that He should think of Himself as coming again to announce the consummated kingdom, and to fulfil in preparation therefore the office of Messianic Judge";[3] and thus, we are asked to believe, these views took shape in Jesus' mind. It is also evident that He expected the consummation to take place at an early date. In His discourses on His return to His disciples, He does not seem to distinguish sharply between His own coming and that of the Spirit. He had, indeed, learned before His death to look on that event as an advantage to His cause, and spoke of it, also, at the last supper, as a sacrifice for the sealing of the covenant with his disciples.[4]

We hardly think that Prof. McGiffert can have realised how inadequate, from the point of view of

[1] P. 27. [2] P. 32.
[3] P, 23. [4] Pp. 33, 34, 69.

Christian faith, this sketch of Jesus must appear. To say that it does not rise above a Unitarian view is very little; for many devout Unitarians have accepted a great deal more. So far as we can gather from this sketch, Jesus is a unique religious genius, whose views were the evolution of His own thoughts, and took shape from the ideals of His time in forms which in any other we would not hesitate to rank as egregious fanaticism. What are we to make of a young Galilean peasant, however possessed with a sense of the divine Fatherhood, who, without special revelation,[1] reaches the conviction that He is the Messiah of His nation, reads confirmation of this in prophecies which were never intended to teach any such doctrine, is zealous for a law of God which God never gave and was soon, as men's thoughts widened, to be abolished; then who, when death was seen to be inevitable, ventured to proclaim that He would come again on the clouds of heaven and judge the world? We know that Prof. McGiffert says in a footnote that a complete picture of Jesus would contain much at which He has not even

[1] The "revelation," or inward illumination, which Dr McGiffert postulates, is, we must assume, unless he gives us much stronger reason for a different opinion, not indistinguishable from the psychological process which yielded Jesus His other conclusions. It was assuredly not a revelation of such a fact as that He—Jesus—was the Messiah promised to the fathers, for on Dr McGiffert's principles such promises were never given. It must have been at highest a development from his "unique Personality," and was compatible with abundant error.

hinted.[1] But surely in the *briefest* sketch we might expect to have the things brought forward which he thinks most important—which enter deepest into his conception of Jesus as the Founder of the Christian Church. We shall do him the justice of observing that later in the book he hints at some of these deeper elements—the consciousness of pre-existence in Christ, for example[2]—but what we urge is that these elements find no place in the sketch at the commencement, are, indeed, incongruous with it, and, if admitted, would revolutionise the whole picture.

Putting the sketch of Prof. McGiffert's book alongside the Jesus of the Gospels, we cannot acknowledge the identity of the portraits. The Jesus of the Gospels, predicted by the prophets, announced by the forerunner, supernaturally born, growing into the consciousness of His unique relation to God and His vocation to be the world's Saviour, divinely attested at the baptism, clothed by the Spirit with superhuman power, in conscious and real communion with the Father whose will and purposes are made fully known to Him at every step, with clearest insight into the nature, laws, progress, and ultimate issues of the kingdom He was founding, its supreme Legislator, commanding men and summoning them to the loyal follow-

[1] P. 1.

[2] P. 491. There remains the question of the value to be attached to these utterances.

ing of, and absolute surrender to, Himself, placing Himself above the law as its Fulfiller and Lord, forgiving sin, announcing His future advent, promising to send the Holy Spirit, assuming the functions of Judge of the world, withal absolutely spotless and holy in His personal character, "Son of man," yet extorting from His disciples the confession that he is the "Son of God" in some unique and incommunicable sense, His life steeped in miracle, His death crowned by resurrection and ascension—there is a unity, a coherence, a fitness in this picture which takes away the idea of extravagance, and prepares us for Pentecost and the apostolic age—which needs, in fact, the doctrine of the apostolic Church to explain it. But there is no such symmetry or fitness, so far as we can see, in Prof. McGiffert's very different presentation. We fail even to get an unequivocal avowal of Christ's complete sinlessness, though, of course, we do not doubt for an instant that Dr McGiffert believes in this, as in much else that he has failed to state. We do wonder, however, that he should labour to make out that Christ does not from the first give His Personality prominence, and that even in His later teaching the Personality is subordinate to the message. Even if there were any failure of this kind in the synoptics, it is amply supplemented in the discourses in John, the substantial accuracy of which Dr McGiffert accepts. But in the synoptics, too, who can fail to see the commanding place Christ's

Personality holds, *e.g.*, in the Sermon on the Mount (Matt. v. 11—"for my sake"; vii. 21-23—"Lord, Lord, . . . I never knew you," etc.), in the "Follow me" of Matt. viii. 22, in the story of the paralytic, etc.? And still more are we astonished to find him picturing Jesus as outbidding the Pharisees in scrupulous obedience to the details of the Mosaic law[1] and binding its outward precepts on men's consciences, when we see everywhere that Jesus, while rendering present conformity to established institutions,[2] laid not the slightest stress on ceremonial or positive precepts, but took up an absolutely lordly and discretionary attitude toward them (in marriage, meats, the Sabbath, etc.). That One who saw so clearly the nature of spiritual religion, and pierced so far into the future of His kingdom as the parables and discourses show, should have had no dream of the abrogation of Jewish "commandments and ordinances," is incredible to us, and would put Jesus, in this vital matter, really behind His followers Stephen[3] and Paul. Why, if outward ritual entered into His thoughts, is there not *one* allusion to it in any part of His teaching on the righteousness of His Kingdom? It simply drops from view as absolutely non-essential.

[1] He sees this in Matt. v. 19, 20, "Except your righteousness," etc.

[2] *Cf.* Matt. iii. 15.

[3] Dr McGiffert does not think that Stephen had this perception either.

Jesus died, but what about the resurrection? If Jesus really rose from the dead, as the apostolic Church believed, that fact looks back upon His whole earthly life and claims, and is, as Paul declares (Rom. i. 4), an emphatic attestation of the latter. If He really rose, then it is not a thing incredible that He should have sent the Spirit, as He promised. A true resurrection does not tally well with the Christ pictured by Dr McGiffert, with his subjectively-evolved and possibly mistaken convictions. On this subject we are left by the author in much dubiety. That the disciples had "appearances" of Christ which produced in them the conviction that he was alive is assumed as certain; that they were real appearances of the living Jesus Dr McGiffert seemingly believes; that they were the appearances recorded in the Gospels he will not admit. We are not warranted, he thinks, in supposing that the events took place as there narrated. The evangelical narratives are displaced, and, with Weizsäcker, a new hypothetical construction is substituted for them. It does not seem to us from the general tenor of Dr McGiffert's volume that he can, or does, admit the actual bodily resurrection of Jesus from the grave. What takes the place of the resurrection of the ordinary Christian faith, is a species of spiritualism, which, to our mind, is infinitely harder to accept. With the resurrection goes, of necessity, the recorded directions of Jesus to His disciples about baptism,

the preaching of the Gospel to every creature, the post-resurrection incidents and discourses generally. This is how the evangelists and early Church—in narratives circulating orally, if not in written form, in the lifetime of the apostles and chief persons interested—conceived of it; but the critics whom Dr McGiffert follows know better. It is not questioned, however, that the apostles preached the fact of the resurrection to multitudes in Jerusalem on and after Pentecost. What kind of resurrection did they preach? Was it one of spiritual manifestations? or a resurrection which left the grave empty on Easter morning? Who can doubt that it was the latter? Surely Paul's testimony—and he goes back expressly on first-hand witness—is conclusive on this point—"*was buried,* and rose again the third day."[1] Can it be that such a Gospel was preached by men who had never taken the trouble to ascertain whether the grave in which their own eyes had seen their Master put was empty? And if Christ rose in the body, why should He not appear in the body, as the witnesses attest? Dr McGiffert's spiritualistic theories have little force when brought to the test of actual facts.

We may simply glance, before passing to the early Church, at what Dr M'Giffert has to say of Baptism and the Lord's Supper. As respects the former, Matt. xxviii. 19 with its Trinitarian formula is set aside, and it is left doubtful whether Jesus ever gave any

[1] 1 Cor. xv. 4.

direct command to baptize.[1] Yet surely there is an enormous counter-difficulty in explaining how the early Church came universally to adopt this rite without such direction as is affirmed by Matthew (*cf.* Mark xvi. 16; also John iii. 5—"born of water and of the Spirit"). The hypothesis that the disciples had been in the habit of baptizing in imitation of John fails of evidence after the early days of the Judæan ministry—the synoptics never hint at such a general baptism by the disciples of Jesus. Christian baptism had also from the first connotations which John's baptism had not.[2] The treatment of the Lord's Supper is, to our thinking, even more arbitrary. That Jesus ate a last supper with His disciples, and even spoke of the bread as His body and the wine as the blood of the covenant, is not doubted; but it is argued, on the usual subjective grounds, that He can hardly have intended to institute a commemorative feast,[3] and the narratives that expressly say He did (Luke, Paul) must, of course, be wrong. The idea that Jesus was "giving veiled utterance to any mysterious truth concerning His person and work"—*i.e.*, we suppose, declaring the atoning significance of His death—is rejected. It was Paul, as we learn from a later chapter, "so far as our sources enable

[1] P. 61. That no contradiction was thought to exist between the Trinitarian formula and the simpler assertion of baptism "in the name of Jesus" is shown, among other things, by the *Didaché* which expressly enforces the former (Chap. vii.), yet uses the latter as synonymous.

[2] Acts ii. 38.

[3] Pp. 68, 69.

us to judge, who first made it a special meal, and separated from all others," so that "it may be said in a certain sense that it was established by him."[1] But how wilful and improbable is such a theory! Dr McGiffert adopts, we venture to think wrongly, Harnack's date for Paul's conversion, A.D. 31—*i.e.*, only a year after the crucifixion. Paul then, who, from that time, mingled with the Christian circles, and knew minutely their beliefs and institutions, gives a detailed account of the institution and mode of observance of the Lord's Supper which, he says, he "received" and faithfully "delivered" as from the Lord. But it is of the very essence of Paul's account, confirmed by Luke, that the Supper was regarded by the Church as a commemorative ordinance instituted by Christ, nor (though the precise expression, "do this in remembrance of me," may not be used) is there a word in the other accounts that conflicts with this, but everything which harmonises with it. An individual might be in error, but the whole primitive Church could hardly be mistaken as to the Lord's design in His parting meal.

With like freedom in the treatment of his sources, Dr McGiffert proceeds to depict the earliest Christian

[1] P. 538. "It is one of the strange paradoxes of history," says Dr McGiffert, "that the great apostle of liberty, who did more than any one else to oppose and destroy the reign of rites and ceremonies, should yet have laid down principles in relation both to the services of the church in general, and to the Lord's Supper in particular, which were essentially formal and stereotyping in their effect."

community. It need not be said that the history of the Book of Acts is considerably revised. The day of Pentecost, it is acknowledged, "has always been regarded as of epochal significance" for the history of the Church, and "Luke himself evidently so regarded it."[1] But our author again knows better. The Holy Spirit had already been received by Christ's disciples, and it is a mistake if the author of the Acts regards the Holy Spirit as "not given till then." Pentecost was, however, a day of power for the conversion of others—this was its true significance. The effect of the Spirit's presence was peculiarly seen in the "speaking with tongues"—a fact which Luke misinterprets as a gift of foreign tongues,[2] but which was in reality "the ecstatic, frenzied, unintelligible, spiritual speech of which Paul tells us in the First Epistle to the Corinthians." One is perplexed by Mr McGiffert's varied ways of speaking of this supposed descent of the Spirit. Was it an objective fact, or was it not? Occasionally from his expressions we might suppose it was; but these expressions alternate continually with others

[1] P. 48.

[2] The question is admittedly a difficult one, and we will not say that Dr McGiffert is wrong in his understanding of the nature of the "tongues." But what, it may be asked, would suggest to one familiar with the ordinary gift of tongues in the early Church the representation of this particular case as a speaking in the languages of the assembled peoples, if really it were not? Is this telepathic power of entering into the speech and consciousness of others in exalted frames of mind altogether without analogy?

which throw the matter back upon subjective convictions. "The speaker was supposed to be completely under the control of the Spirit"—"his ecstatic utterances, inspired, as it was believed, by the Holy Ghost"—"in possession of the Spirit, as they all believed themselves to be" — "such mysterious phenomena were uniformly attributed to the Spirit, and in them was found the guarantee of his activity."[1] In this atmosphere, we are told later, "soberness and self-restraint were at a discount, and uncontrolled enthusiasm, ecstacy and spiritual abandonment seemed the natural expression of the Christian life," so that "these manifestations of the Spirit doubtless had much to do with the reputation for folly and fanaticism which very commonly attached to the Christians in the community in which they lived."[2] Are we then warranted in regarding such manifestations as a work of the Spirit of God at all, or does Dr McGiffert really so regard them—save as all religious fanaticism and extravagance may be described as the outcome of spiritual enthusiasm? Yet this, we are told, was the peculiar evidence adduced by Peter and others of the fact of the resurrection. "Apologetics"—an apology, we should fancy, of little modern worth —"was the imperative need of the hour . . . the emphasis was changed from the Gospel itself to the evidence for its truth. . . . Not the Fatherhood of God, but the Messiahship of Jesus, formed the

[1] Pp. 50, 51, 518, 520, etc. [2] P. 519.

burden of the preaching of the apostles, and so the Master's estimate of values was reversed."[1] Other startling things are said of this early preaching, as that, *e.g.*, so long as the Messiahship of Jesus was true, "His character and nature were a matter of comparative indifference."[2] Most astonishing of all is the declaration that Peter's sermon involved no "rebuke of the self-righteousness of his countrymen"; was not "intended to assert that every man is a sinner, and that repentance is a universal precondition of enjoying God's favour"; and that His words "leave room for the theory, which was widespread, at least in Pharisaic circles, that it is possible for a man to keep the law of God and thereby to secure through his own efforts the favour and blessing of the Almighty."[3] Peter, in short, was a legalist; and this stands in connection with the theory that the believers of the early Jerusalem Church were, as Baur held, Jews of the strictest type—zealots for the law, and, like their Master, incapable of conceiving of its abrogation. That the early Christians were Jews, and continued to the end of their days in the observance of Jewish customs—though not as a means of obtaining salvation—that, further, they only gradually came to the knowledge that the law was abolished for any—lies on the surface of the narrative: but he will have a strangely constituted mind who can read into the discourses of the Book of Acts the absolutely *un*evangelical senti-

[1] P. 54. [2] P. 54. [3] P. 59.

ments which Dr McGiffert sees in them.[1] The upshot of his view is that the true representatives of the primitive believers were the later Ebionites — a position, we believe, utterly unhistorical.[2]

It is impossible to follow in anything like detail the further representations of the early Church given us in Dr McGiffert's pages. We observe that he contends that the apostles held "no official position" in the Church of Jerusalem; nay, "there exists no proof that they held any official position in the Church at large, or that they were supposed in these early days to have been entrusted with any kind of authority over it."[3] It constitutes no proof that, as is admitted, "the author of the Book of Acts had another conception of the significance of the twelve apostles"—thought of them, in fact, as an apostolic college, as exercising government, as heads of the Church at large; and that Paul apparently had the same view, enhancing, by his emphasis on his equality with the twelve, "not only his own dignity and authority, but theirs as well."[4] This does not suit Dr McGiffert's reading of the facts, and so must be set aside. We fear much in the Gospels will

[1] It is no wonder that Dr McGiffert has to set aside the epistles of James and Peter as not by these writers.

[2] Dr McGiffert does not seem to take account of that other strain in early Jewish Christianity represented by the Nazarenes, who were tolerant in their views of the law, friendly to Paul, and more nearly, though still imperfectly, represented the Jerusalem community.

[3] P. 46; *cf.* p. 650.

[4] P. 47.

require to be set aside also—the delegating by Jesus to the apostles of authority in His kingdom (the keys, binding and loosing), the sitting on the twelve thrones judging the tribes of Israel, the post-resurrection commissions, etc. Paul will have to lay aside his "rod";[1] will have to lay aside also his right to exhort his emissaries to the firm assertion of *their* authority when necessary (Timothy, Titus).[2] It is characteristic that this hypothesis of the non-official standing of the apostles is subsequently made the ground of rejecting the narratives of the gift of the Spirit by the laying on of hands, etc.[3]

Omitting other matters, as the view taken of Stephen's "blasphemy," we hasten to glance at the author's picture of Paul and his theology. This, as formerly remarked, is the principal part of the book, and in the historical sections contains much that is suggestive. Yet the whole is marred, in our judgment, by its fatally defective fundamental view, and the prevailing arbitrariness of treatment. The extraordinary — perhaps supernatural — character of Paul's conversion is indeed emphasised. "Paul therefore believed that at a particular period in his life the risen Christ appeared to him, and to that appearance he owed his Christian faith."[4] But this

[1] 1 Cor. iv. 21 ; *cf.* xi. 34 ; 2 Cor. x. 8, 11 ; xiii. 10, etc.

[2] We remember that Dr McGiffert does not accept the Pastoral epistles in their present form. He ingeniously argues that the apostles (in the usual conception) are rather successors of the bishops, than the bishops successors of the apostles (p. 97).

[3] Pp. 97, 100. [4] P. 121.

risen Christ was, to Paul's view, a spirit, not a being of flesh and blood (it is, however, to depart from the whole analogy of Paul's teaching to suppose that Christ's appearance was not *in a body*, albeit a glorified one—the very body that had risen from the grave). Paul at once recognised this spirit appearing to him as the risen Jesus, and gained from his vision the convictions (1) that Jesus was the Messiah; (2) "That such continued spiritual existence presupposed a life of absolute holiness on the part of Jesus" (Paul's conviction of Christ's sinlessness is thus made an inference from his Damascus vision); and (3) "that he must have been nothing less than a heavenly being, endowed with the Spirit of God."[1] He was thus led to the belief, not altogether unknown among the Jews of his time, "that the Messiah belonged to a higher order of being than man, that He had an existence in heaven before His appearance on earth, and that He was to be sent down thence by God to fulfil his Messianic calling."[2] Here then is the basis of the more supernatural part of Paul's theology, and the reader may judge of its adequacy for himself. But Paul's theology, we are instructed, had a deeper root—his own consciousness of the inner conflict of flesh and spirit. Paul's view was dualistic. The flesh, or evil nature, is incurably corrupt, and must die; the personality is drawn into slavery to the flesh and participates in its sinfulness. Hence the

[1] Pp. 126, 127. [2] P. 127.

terrible struggle between Paul "as a conscious person, knowing and approving the good, and his human nature or flesh with its inherent corruption; a struggle which results in his continual defeat."[1] What now is salvation? Here we come to Dr McGiffert's characteristic positions. What, in Paul's view, the sinner needs, is not forgiveness, but deliverance; deliverance, not from the penalty of sin, but from the source of sin. The flesh, or evil nature, must die—that is the necessary fruit of its corruption; and the only way to escape from this death is to escape from the flesh itself. How is this escape to be accomplished? Paul gained the secret in his Damascus vision. Jesus had died in the flesh, but through the stronger power of holiness within Him, was now living the life of a glorified spirit.[2] But why had Jesus—a superhuman being —done all this? The only answer possible to Paul was that He had done it "to free others from the burden of sin and death, and to give them that life with God which he himself enjoyed."[3] The efficacy of Christ in salvation, therefore, lies in His power to impart this new life: the person united with Christ has a new nature; "His personality has received a new content — Spirit in place of flesh."[4] "It is not so much forgiveness, as a new life; not so much pardon for the old, as release from it that is needed, and that is secured, accord-

[1] P. 125.
[2] Pp. 126, 127.
[3] P. 127.
[4] P. 133.

ing to Paul, when a man dies with Christ unto the flesh, and rises with Him in the Spirit."[1] In this light Dr McGiffert re-reads the Pauline doctrine of justification. The believer is free from the law, "not because the law has exacted its full penalty—the law exacts no penalty—but simply because it can sustain no relation to one who has ceased to exist."[2] Justification is not to be interpreted forensically, but vitally; and the righteousness of God which the believer receives is "the actual divine righteousness or righteous nature which man receives from God when he receives God's Spirit"[3]—a "righteousness not imputed, but imparted to man."[4] The difficulty remains that, as is admitted, Paul *does* use forensic terms, speaks of imputation, etc., but it is held that "to regard such expressions as formative in Paul's thinking and to read his conception of salvation in their light, is to misinterpret him."[5] Forgiveness is not prominent in his writings; save in Ephesians and Colossians, it is only once explicitly referred to.[6] So far is this carried that we are actually asked to reject Acts xiii. 38, 39—"Every one that believeth is justified from all things," etc., as not sufficiently Pauline.[7]

A great deal of the above requires perhaps little comment. It conflicts too absolutely with well-

[1] P. 133. [2] P. 139.
[3] The view reminds of Osiander's, but Osiander had other elements.
[4] P. 143. [5] P. 144. [6] Rom. iv. 7. [7] P. 186.

established exegetical results as to Pauline usage to need formal refutation. The one thing clear about it is that it subverts the ordinary Reformation doctrine of justification—leaves no place in consistency for even forgiveness of sins—and substitutes for Christ in His atoning righteousness as our hope and standing-ground before God the doctrine of salvation through the impartation of a new divine life. The root of the whole matter lies, we take it, in the false dualism which Dr McGiffert—again following German leading—imports into Paul. The apostle teaches no such doctrine of realistic dualism as our author attributes to him. The "flesh" is not with Paul a term identical with "human nature," in the sense that human nature in its whole substance—mental and bodily—is incapable of redemption and sanctification. Originally good, it is in its entirety the object of Christ's redeeming work. The renewed man, accordingly, carries with him into the new life all his original faculties and powers—is the *same* man in every respect as before—only he is delivered from sin's dominion, and lives unto God through the power of the Spirit given to him. Even Dr McGiffert cannot ignore the passages in which the apostle exhorts Christians to use their members as instruments of righteousness, as formerly they had used them in the service of sin.[1] It is in fact their *bodies* they are to present to God as "living sacrifices."[2] This single

[1] Pp. 136, 137. [2] Rom. xii. 1.

fact shows the baselessness of Dr McGiffert's contention; just as his argument about the body on p. 134 is wrecked on such a passage as Rom. viii. 11—"shall also quicken your *mortal* bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you." The personality is identical throughout, the subject of sin and condemnation in the old life, of forgiveness and renewal in the new; needing justification; finding both in Christ, sin's Atoner, and the Giver of the Spirit (in Dr McGiffert's version of the Pauline theology, Christ *is* the Spirit; the two are identical).

Paul's theology is represented by Dr McGiffert as so peculiarly the evolution of his own experience that it is difficult to bring it into any line with the positive teaching of Jesus, and equally with the theology of the other sections of the Church. Yet nothing is clearer than that in proclaiming Christ's death for our sins, and His resurrection for our justification, Paul believed himself to be preaching only the Gospel currently received. So with his views of the Person of Christ, in regard to which he constantly assumes that his readers' estimate of the Lord's Person is the same as his own. His doctrine and theirs is one. One thing is gratifying in this book, viz., the positive ground Dr McGiffert takes up on the genuineness of the Pauline epistles (excepting the Pastorals), and his cogent argument to show that the theology of the later epistles in no way conflicts with that of the earlier. One staggers,

however, at his placing Galatians before 1 and 2 Thessalonians, and at the separation of it from Romans,[1] as at many minor features of criticism. The details of the historical chapters cannot be gone into at length, though very much in them invites remark. There is what looks like an unequivocal recognition of miraculous powers in the early Church,[2] an acknowledgment all the more welcome after previous ambiguities about the supernatural. In the treatment of the famous interview of Gal. ii. and of the Jerusalem Council, which Dr McGiffert rightly, we think (as against Ramsay), brings together, there is, with some suggestive discussion of the difficulties, more deference to the Tübingen theory than is necessary. It is certainly surprising to find it argued that there is no sign that Paul was acknowledged by the Three as a fellow-apostle.[3] This is soon after converted into the positive assertion that they did not so recognise him.[4] But it is inconceivable that Peter and James and John should give Paul "the right hand of fellowship" without thereby endorsing his well-known and stoutly maintained claim, or that Paul should have accepted a "right hand" which did not carry such endorsement with it. The apostles—Peter and the others — could not have denied Paul's apostleship without disputing his conversion and the commission which accompanied it; and the evidence is that

[1] The view, of course, is not peculiar to Dr McGiffert.
[2] P. 189. [3] P. 197. [4] P. 201.

they did not.[1] The episode of the decree is an acknowledged difficulty, but there seems no need for resorting to the round-about theory favoured by Dr McGiffert. It is more than probable, as Ritschl argues, that there was from the first a real difference of view in the Jerusalem Church regarding the principle on which the decree rested, and when this came to light, as it was bound soon to do in the matter of eating,[2] the arrangement of the Council broke through and the decree passed into desuetude. There is, to our mind, no insuperable difficulty in Paul's agreeing to the very moderate compromise proposed by the Jerusalem Council; any more than we see occasion to doubt the truth of the statements that Paul personally observed the customs of his nation.[3] Dr McGiffert, however, again knows better, and categorically affirms—"Paul had certainly been living for years in entire disregard of the law of the fathers."[4] The question of the second imprisonment need not detain us, but Dr McGiffert's peremptory dictum: "If Luke could have recorded that he was acquitted and released by the emperor it seems inconceivable that he would have failed to do so,"[5] might surely as well be met by the assertion that if Luke had known that Paul was put to death at the end of his two years' imprisonment, he could hardly have failed to mention the fact. And

[1] Acts ix. 27; Gal. i. 18, 19. [2] *Cf.* Gal. ii. 11-14.
[3] Acts xxi. 24; xxiv. 18; xxv. 8; xxviii. 17; *cf.* xviii. 18, 21.
[4] P. 40. [5] P. 418.

Clement's expression τὸ τέρμα τῆς δύσεως, taken in connection with the circumstance that the writer's standpoint was Rome, means surely more than Dr McGiffert puts into it.[1]

We remarked above that in his general view of Christ and His Gospel, Paul knew himself to be standing on the common Christian ground of his day. Dr McGiffert, however, will have it that the general Church had a very different kind of Christianity from Paul's—"wide asunder as the poles."[2] This general Christianity was legalistic in spirit. Its ruling idea was salvation through fulfilment of the new (*i.e.*, Christian) law. Grace comes in to supply deficiencies. "The grace of God manifested not alone in His offer of salvation to men, and in the revelation of His righteous will by whose observance that salvation might be attained, but also in his readiness to assist men in their efforts to keep His law and to forgive them for their breaches of it."[3] The idea of faith was becoming "intellectual" (even in John); it furnished the motive "which leads a man to obey the law of God, and thus secure salvation."[4] Calvinists will note with interest that the divine election of Christians is based "on the observance of that law." "Many passages, as indeed the entire conception of the

[1] P. 416.

[2] P. 459.

[3] P. 460. The view thus attributed to the early Church hardly rises above the level of the Socinian.

[4] P. 458.

Gospel which underlies them, show clearly enough that the election is not independent of man's conduct, but that it is either a general determination that they shall be saved who lived truly Christian lives, or the particular choice of those who it is foreseen will thus live."[1] Where, we ask, is this wonderful type of Christianity found depicted? Marvellous to relate, the first "striking evidence" of its wide prevalence is found in the synoptic Gospels;[2] then the other writings of the New Testament are adduced, with the addition of Clement, Barnabas, Ignatius, Hermas, etc.—all treated as on the same level. We should regard it as a work of supererogation to attempt to prove that this is *not* the teaching of Hebrews, of John, of Peter, or even of James. It is marvellous how for a moment Dr McGiffert can imagine he finds it in them. If the inculcation of the duty of keeping God's commandments — of doing His will — is a sign of legalism, the reproach must fall, not on the disciples, but on the Master Himself.[3] Yet the writer of 1 Peter is held to be "saturated with Paul's ideas";[4] Hebrews is Philonic; the Johannine writings are *per contra* cleared of Philonic influence. But strange opinions are attributed to the Johannine writer. Though he has learned much from Paul,[5] his theology is in-

[1] P. 461. [2] P. 462.

[3] Nearly everything that Dr McGiffert finds in the other writers could be matched in Paul: even the more general meaning of faith is common in his usage (*cf.*, *e.g.*, 1 and 2 Thess.).

[4] P. 485. [5] P. 492.

dependent. He tends to intellectualism,[1] "has no such controlling ethical interest as characterised Paul and the synoptists,"[2] above all has the idea "that the Gospel is not for the sinful but the righteous"[3]—this in face of John iii. 16.[4] Yet his exalted view of Christ's person is gained from the impression of Christ's earthly life (not from Philo), and even the belief in pre-existence is thought to be based on genuine words of Jesus.[5] The writer in the early Church with whom "the characteristic views of Paul found their fullest acceptance and their most remarkable development" was "the great Christian reformer Marcion."[6] Were we not justified in saying that the picture given of the apostolic age lacks in an extraordinary degree in symmetry and unity?

We cannot in the closing sentences of this article touch on the important questions of Church constitution and government raised by Dr McGiffert, nor can we enter at any length into the critical questions involved in his theories of the documents. We adhere to the view, which seems to us best supported, that "elders" and "bishops" were one and the same class of office-bearers in the primitive Church, and regard as arbitrary Dr McGiffert's attempt to make out a distinction between "elders"

[1] P. 498. [2] P. 496. [3] P. 496.

[4] John is even tinged with the current legalism (p. 495), has a lower view of Christ's resurrection than Paul (p. 494), etc.

[5] P. 489. [6] P. 502.

and "appointed elders" (bishops) in Clement's epistle.[1] Acts xiv. 23, which there is not the least ground for questioning, shows the practice in this respect, and proves the official character of the elders. The critical questions open up a wide field, the working of which in detail must be left to others. We only desire to put on record our impression of the arbitrariness which seems to rule in Prof. McGiffert's procedure here also. Is there not an arbitrariness, *e.g.*, in accepting so largely the trustworthiness of the records in Acts, yet denying, in face of the consentient tradition of antiquity, the authorship of this book and of the third Gospel to Luke, the companion of Paul?[2] Apart from other reasons, how does Dr McGiffert get over the proved linguistic identity of the "we" sections (which *are* of apostolic date) with the other portions of the book? Does the introduction to the third Gospel also not fairly require us to put the author in the second generation of Christians? Is it again so certain (though the view is usual) that Luke used the Gospel of Mark and the *Logia* of Matthew, and would he have ranked such documents so summarily amongst the attempts at narration which he mentions? The intricacies of the synoptical problem are not yet so cleared up that one can assert this

[1] P. 663.

[2] Of course, if Luke were the author, Dr McGiffert would not be able to take many of the liberties with the narrative that he does.

dependence with confidence. To take only one simple example—if Luke used the *Logia* in common with the author of our Matthew, it must have been in a *Greek* form, for many of the passages in Matthew and Luke are verbally identical (or nearly so) in Greek.[1] Yet again Luke breaks off from Matthew, and gives identical sayings in so entirely different a shape that they cannot easily be conceived of as taken from the same written source, either in Greek or Aramaic (*passim*). If, however, the author of Luke (and Acts) was not dependent on our written gospels, his date *must* be early.[2] Take again 1 Peter, which on subjective grounds is taken from that apostle and given to an unknown writer in the end of the first century. Here again we have the arbitrary setting aside of the inscription, of an unchallenged tradition, of the incorporation of the epistle in early versions,—all because certain critics have a preconceived hypothesis of how Peter must have written if he wrote at all The epistle of James does not possess such complete early attestation, but the circles that did accept it, so far as we have any evidence, did not doubt that it proceeded from the "James, a servant of God and

[1] *E.g.*, Luke x. 2—Matt. ix. 37 ; Luke x. 13-15—Matt. xi. 21-23 ; Luke x. 21, 22—Matt. xi. 25-27.

[2] With hardly less ingenuity and cogency the Baur school made out Mark to be based on Matthew and Luke, because in several sections Mark agrees partly with one and partly with the other, and so seems a compound of both. See Davidson's *Introduction*, i., p. 480.

of the Lord Jesus Christ" whose name appears in the commencement [this Dr McGiffert rejects]; and the majority of scholars who are not controlled by dogmatic reasons accept it as genuine, and of early date. Dr McGiffert's hypothesis requires him to regard the "twelve tribes of the dispersion" (i. 1) as applying figuratively "to Christians in general without regard to race."[1] The arbitrariness of treatment is perhaps even more apparent in the verdict passed on the Pastoral Epistles. Portions are selected as genuinely Pauline (parts of earlier Pauline letters), and the rest is discarded for its supposed un-Pauline character. The difficulties attaching to these letters are well known, but granting (thus even Harnack) a second imprisonment of the apostle, they are not insuperable; and the literary peculiarities seem to preclude a parcelling out of the material in the way attempted. We shall not trespass on the Johannine question. The approximation of Dr McGiffert is so close to the Johannine authorship that it is hardly worth his while to resist the general tradition. Taken in its entirety, we cannot believe that this work of Dr McGiffert will hold the field as a successful interpretation of apostolic Christianity.

[1] P. 584.

THE MIRACULOUS CONCEPTION AND MODERN THOUGHT

IX

THE MIRACULOUS CONCEPTION AND MODERN THOUGHT[1]

It is proposed in this article to offer some suggestions on a question by no means new in itself, but which a recent ecclesiastical decision in Germany has again brought into prominence—the question, viz., How far the miraculous conception is an essential part of the faith of the Church about Christ? The decision referred to is that in the case of a talented young Würtemberg pastor—Herr Schrempf—who a year ago (1892) was deposed by his ecclesiastical superiors for his refusal to use the so-called Apostles' Creed in the public service of baptism. This case of Schrempf naturally excited much interest, and has called forth a somewhat warm controversy in which Harnack and other writers of a Ritschlian tendency have taken a leading part. The controversy has gradually widened out into one of principle, involving the attitude of the Church to the Apostles' Creed generally, and specially raising the question of how far belief

[1] *The Thinker*, August 1893.

in the miraculous conception is of the essence of Christian faith.

In dealing with this question it is important to guard ourselves against ambiguity. At first sight it might appear as if it were less faith in Christ that was at stake than faith in the two particular narratives of the Gospels which record this supernatural occurrence. These narratives might conceivably be regarded as legendary additions to the original apostolic tradition—attempts on the part of the Church to explain the wonderful impression which Christ's Person made upon it,—and yet faith in Christ Himself, as respects the main features of His character and claims, might be thought not to be affected. This is, in fact, the attitude taken up towards these narratives by many critics and theologians whose Christianity we do not dream of doubting. The immediate object of faith, they contend, is Christ's Person—Christ Himself; whether He came into the world in a supernatural manner is a secondary question to be decided on historical grounds; on which, therefore, individuals will hold different opinions according to their views of the worth of the tradition. One need not, however, either doubt the *bona fides* of the theologians who take up this attitude, or dispute the soundness of their general position that the immediate object of faith is Christ Himself, and not the manner of His origin, in order to remain unconvinced that faith in Christ and the doctrine of His supernatural birth are really so loosely

related as they suppose. It may very well be that Christ's Person is the direct and immediate object of faith, and yet that, in the nature and reality of things, the supernatural birth is the necessary presupposition of that Person, and therefore a fact which faith, whether at first it realises all that is implied in it or not, is vitally concerned in holding fast.

In the mind of the early Church there was no dubiety on the question here raised. An instinct which we may pardonably regard as a sound one led it to place the supernatural birth among the few fundamental articles of its earliest creed—the much contested *Apostolicum*. "Born by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary," reads that symbol in its oldest (Roman) form. We need not suppose that this article was introduced simply because of the two narratives of the supernatural birth in Matthew and Luke. Its presence there is due much more to the sound instinctive perception of the collective Church that this article was vital to its faith in Christ as Saviour and Lord, and in this light the testimony of the creed is still of value to us. It is noteworthy that the recently discovered apology of Aristides and the epistles of Ignatius likewise include the Virgin birth among the fundamental facts of Christianity. This faith of the early Church remained practically unchallenged for centuries. Only one (Judaizing) section among the Ebionites, and Cerinthus, the Carpocratians and certain of the Ophites, among

the Gnostics, are known to have denied it. Now, however, it is impossible not to recognise that there is a wide-spread drift in the opposite direction. That it should be so where the sinlessness of Christ and the supernatural aspects of His character and work are rejected, as, *e.g.*, by Strauss and Renan, is not wonderful. But even within the Church, from Schleiermacher downwards, the tendency has been strong to dispute the historical character of the narratives of the miraculous conception, and to treat the belief in the fact as at least unessential.

1. Critically, the tendency is to regard the narratives as legendary. Thus, *e.g.*, Meyer, Ewald, Beyschlag, Keim, etc.

2. Dogmatically, the belief is treated as unessential. Thus, *e.g.*, by Meyer on Matt. i., and now very emphatically by writers of the Ritschlian school.

3. Scientifically, it is held to be inadmissible. This, however, is dangerous ground to take. Professor A. B. Bruce well points out the issues in his work on Apologetics. "A sinless man," he says, "is as much a miracle in the moral world as a Virgin birth is a miracle in the physical world. If we are to hold a speculative view of the universe which absolutely excludes miracle, then we must be content with a Christianity which consists in duly appreciating a great but not perfect character, or cease to profess Christianity at all. If, on the other hand, to satisfy the demands of our religious nature we insist on retaining the moral miracle, then we must provide

ourselves with a theory of the universe wide enough to make room for as much of the miraculous element as may appear to the wisdom of God necessary for realising His great end in creating and sustaining the universe." [1]

The case of Pastor Schrempf has been referred to above. It need not be overlooked, however, that this case only brings to a sharper and more public issue a difference of view which has long been agitating the continental Churches, and which sooner or later required to be faced, together with the difference in the estimate of Christianity which it involves. It is many years since Dr Philip Schaff wrote in his *Creeds of Christendom*, "It is characteristic that, while the Church of England is agitated by the question of continuing simply the obligatory use of the *Athanasian* Creed, the Protestant Churches on the Continent are disturbed by the more radical question of setting aside the *Apostles'* Creed for teaching what is said to be contrary to the spirit of the age. Lisco and Sydow, in Berlin, have taken special exception to the clause 'conceived by the Holy Ghost, born

[1] P. 410. It has been plausibly argued by Mr Griffith-Jones (*Ascent through Christ*, p. 262) and others, on the ground of the curious scientific facts of parthenogenesis, that if the miracle of the Virgin birth is above nature, it is not contrary to nature. It is certainly a striking statement of Prof. G. T. Romanes, in his *Darwin and after Darwin*, that "even if a virgin has ever conceived and borne a son, and even if such a fact in the human species has been unique, it would not betoken any breach of physiological continuity" (p. 119). On the facts of parthenogenesis, see Geddes's *Evolution of Sex*, chap. xiii.

of the Virgin Mary,' and maintain, in the face of St Matthew and St Luke, that Jesus was 'the legitimate Son of Joseph and Mary.'"[1]

On the critical aspect of the question I have at present nothing to say. For what may be urged in reply to the critical objections, I may refer to Weiss, Lange, Godet, [Sanday], etc.[2] Only it is important to recognise, even in this regard, that if the narratives of the supernatural birth are rejected, the alternative which has to be confronted is that of deliberate fiction — for unconscious myth and legend are here quite out of place. But this is an alternative from which, when it is fairly faced, most reverent minds will shrink. My immediate purpose, however, is not to discuss the critical objections, but rather to consider the underlying premiss of the critical objections—namely, the idea that the supernatural birth is a thing indifferent to the substance of the Christian faith. I propose to ask whether this is so, or whether it is not the case that this miraculous fact is a necessary presupposition of the faith we have in Christ as the Holy One of God and the Divine Redeemer of the race. It is, in other words, the dogmatic, rather than the critical, aspect of the subject I propose to look at.

Here, again, there are certain lines of argument belonging to the old dogmatic modes of thought which I would at once set aside. From the point of view of the federal theology, *e.g.*, the miraculous

[1] I., p. 20. [2] See additional note.

conception was necessary in order to secure the Person of the Redeemer from participation in the guilt of Adam's first transgression, with its entail of original sin and other penal effects on all descending from him by ordinary generation. In virtue of His exceptional origin, Christ is regarded as outside the sphere of this *damnosa hæreditas*. He is not an ordinary member of the race, but a supernatural addition to it; an incomer into it, or graft upon it from without, and therefore not involved in its Adamic liabilities. As thus free from sin and hereditary guilt, He is able to undertake man's redemption. I am far from saying that the idea at the bottom of these representations is altogether a false one, but I do not undertake the discussion of them here. The line I mean to pursue is different, and more in accordance with the ruling ideas of our own time. I wish to ask, How far does the simple fact of a new creative origin such as we have in Christ—of a sinless Personality—or, on the higher level of faith, of the union of the Godhead with humanity in the incarnation, involve a supernatural act in the production of Christ's bodily nature?

Before answering this question in respect to the second Adam, I would go back for a moment or two on certain problems suggested by modern inquiry respecting the first Adam, or what is called in modern parlance "the evolution of man." The whole drift of modern science, as every one now is

aware, is to seek an explanation of the production of living organisms—and as the highest of these, of man—in accordance with the laws of evolution. But in the process of this inquiry along the lines of science itself, certain difficulties emerge. 1. First, there is the difficulty of explaining satisfactorily the mode or laws, or what are termed by Mr Spencer the "factors," of evolution. 2. There is the difficulty of applying the conception of evolution to the world without being compelled to recognise the existence of new beginnings, *e.g.*, the origin of life, of consciousness, etc. 3. Above all, there is the difficulty of giving a satisfactory account of the origin of rational and moral life in man. It is well known that this is the point at which Dr A. R. Wallace in his work on *Darwinism* specially feels the need of a supernatural cause.[1] I may cite, however, a more recent work bearing on this particular subject —I refer to Professor H. Calderwood's volume on *Evolution and Man's Place in Nature.* The main, and, as I think, irrefragable thesis throughout this volume is, that while the doctrine of evolution may be admitted (Dr Calderwood thinks must be admitted) in the organic sphere, it fails utterly to explain the origin of life and mind, and, above all, the rational and spiritual life of man as the highest being in nature, and the connecting link between the natural and the spiritual worlds. His position is concisely summed up in the following sentences:—

[1] Pp. 473-6.

"Research, extended over the wide field of comparative biology, has accumulated a large body of evidence demonstrating the impossibility of tracing the origin of man's rational life to evolution from a lower life. There are no physical forces in nature sufficient to account for the appearance of this life. The insufficiency of the evidence for its evolution becomes increasingly obvious as the demands are more exactly ascertained. Animal intelligence shows no effective preparation for rational intelligence . . . nor can the characteristics of rational life be explained by any possible advance in the structure of nerves and brain. . . . The rational life of man stands out to view on an eminence completely severed from this scheme of organic evolution. As animal life—a type of physical existence—human life is fitted into the system of organic life on the earth. As a rational life—a type of spiritual existence—human life is exalted above all life besides, severed from the companionship of animals."[1]

Now, it is noteworthy that many of the writers who take this view seem willing to concede that, while man's mind cannot be accounted for by the processes of Darwinian evolution, his physical nature may be accounted for by these processes. I am not sure whether this is the position of Professor Calderwood in the work above cited, but there are some passages which would suggest that it is. Dr Wallace, at one time at least, held that exceptional causes

[1] Pp. 337-8.

are implied in the production of man's body, as well as of his mind. (See his essay on "The Limits of Natural Selection as applied to Man" in his *Contributions to the Theory of Natural Selection.*) If he has not changed these views, he does not, at any rate, urge them in his more recent work. But the point I wish to press here is, that the view which postulates a supernatural cause for the mind of man and hands over his body to the ordinary processes of evolution is untenable. For see the difficulty in which such a view lands itself. It is a corollary from the known laws of the connection of mind and body that every mind needs an organism fitted to it. If the mind of man is the product of a new cause, the brain, which is the instrument of that mind, must share in its peculiar origin. The higher mind cannot be put into the simian brain. From the human brain to the ape brain there is, as science tells us, "an abrupt fall," and no links have yet been discovered to fill up the gap between. Evolution, on the theory in question, has brought up the brain of man's simian ancestor to a given point; then a higher cause comes in to endow the creature with rational powers separated by a wide gulf from the degree of intelligence previously possessed. But of what use would these powers be if a corresponding rise did not take place on the organic side? And on the terms of the hypothesis, natural evolution has no means within itself to effect that rise. The conclusion we are driven to is that the produc-

tion of a higher type of organism—the distinctively human—is the correlative of the creation of the higher type of mind, and a special supernatural act is needed for both.

Now, let us apply this analogy with all reverence to the greater mystery—the production of the bodily nature of the second Adam. Here, again, we have a creative beginning. On the lowest supposition compatible with Christian faith we have in Christ a perfect human soul—flawless—one standing in such unique relation to God that a perfect Sonship is the result. On the higher ground of faith, we have the entrance of a divine being into humanity —the incarnation of the Son. But a perfect soul such as we have in Christ, to go no higher for the present, implies a perfect organism. Moreover, in its place in history such a soul is a moral miracle. It is not to be accounted for out of historical evolution. It transcends the past; is lifted clear above it; is not to be explained by factors already in existence. Whence, then, the organism that clothes it, and serves as its perfect medium of expression? Whence this sudden rise from the imperfect to the absolute in humanity, from the impure and sin-tainted to the absolutely pure? This rise, as we saw before, cannot be on the spiritual side alone; it involves the organic as well. There must be a suitable humanity on the physical side to match the perfection of the spirit. I would not simply say, therefore, with Professor Bruce, in the words above

quoted, that "a sinless man is as much a miracle in the moral world as a Virgin birth is a miracle in the physical world," but I would say that the moral miracle, from its very nature, implies the concurrence of a physical one. This is where Meyer, and all who would make light of the physical miracle, seem to me to err. They recognise a Divine act in the Incarnation on its spiritual side, but do not seem to perceive that this "mystery of godliness" necessitates a special cause operating on the physical side as well. The origin of One like Christ is, view it as we will, a miracle. A new power comes with Him into humanity. The words of the annunciation to Mary are to this hour the most scientific expression of what we must acknowledge as involved in the birth of the Redeemer—"The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee; wherefore also that which is to be born shall be called holy, the Son of God" (Luke i. 35, R.V.).

The view here taken is strengthened if we observe how commonly in practice belief in the miraculous conception and in the sinlessness of Jesus stand or fall together. There is much truth in what Professor Bruce says: "It has to be remembered that faith is ever in a state of unstable equilibrium while the supernatural is dealt with eclectically; admitted in the moral and spiritual sphere, denied in the physical. With belief in the Virgin birth is apt to go belief in the virgin life, as not less than the

other a part of that veil that must be taken away that the true Jesus may be seen as He was—a morally defective man, better than most, but not perfectly good."[1] I have sought to show a yet deeper ground for this, viz., that the virgin life drives us back upon a supernatural origin even in the sphere of the organic. Professor Bruce, indeed, says on a previous page: "Under what conditions such a sinless Christ is possible is a very important question, but it belongs to theology rather than to religion."[2] But it only does not belong to religious faith so long as faith does not clearly recognise its own presuppositions.[3]

I am far, therefore, from being prepared to concede that this article of the miraculous conception is an unessential one, or one which can be dropped without injury out of the Apostles' Creed. The objection naturally which will be made to the above line of argument is that at most it proves the existence of a supernatural factor in Christ's birth, but not necessarily the Virgin birth of the Gospels. This is the position taken up apparently by the writer of a conciliatory article on the *Apostolicum* question in the pages of the Ritschlian

[1] *Apologetics*, p. 410. [2] P. 409.

[3] In his *Mirac. Elements of Christianity*, Prof. Bruce says: "The connection is so close that few who earnestly believe in the absolute worth of Christ's Person will be disposed to deny the truth of the Evangelic narratives relating to the manner of his entrance into, and exit from the world." See the whole passage, pp. 352-3.

journal, *Die Christliche Welt* (27th Oct. 1892). This writer, Professor D. Fricke, of Leipzig, cannot understand why any one should take offence at the article of the Creed, "conceived by the Holy Ghost." For if there is agreement that Jesus Christ is the incomparable One, who has the Spirit "without measure," and that from the root of His life outwards, how could He have been otherwise conceived and born than in the power of the Most High, the power of the Holy Ghost? Neither would he stumble at the clause, "born of the Virgin Mary," but he objects to any one dragging down this, which he grants to be a Scriptural expression and thought, into the physiological. This would be to overlook the fact that God acts only on the ground of His own natural order, never without it, or against it. He would interpret the expression, therefore, as simply meaning that the humanity which was to be redeemed could not produce the Redeemer from its own power, else it would have redeemed itself, and not have needed the Son of God. Now, it may be impossible to show *a priori* that the supernatural birth necessarily implies a Virgin birth; but on the other hand, if the fact of a supernatural factor in the earthly origin of Jesus is admitted—and, with all respect to Professor Fricke, this amounts to a physical miracle—all *a priori* objection to the Virgin birth vanishes. The record in the Gospels simply supplies, in the form of history, what faith on its own grounds demands. The history

becomes, therefore, credible and worthy of all acceptation. For that at which naturalism stumbles in the synoptic narrative undoubtedly is not simply the parthenogenesis, but the idea of miraculous conception in any form. If once it is granted that a new creative cause enters into the production of Christ's humanity, what is there any longer incredible in the supposition that this should supersede the ordinary natural cause in the manner which the synoptics represent? I conclude that the narratives of the nativity — which in their ground-traits could only have come from the Virgin-mother herself — are entirely in keeping with that which faith demands as the presupposition of its own assertions on the Person and character of the Son of God, and that the supernatural conception is rightly regarded as an essential part of the Christian Creed.

Additional Notes

1. *The critical objection.*—A few words may be added to what is said on p. 226. Objection is taken to the narratives in Matthew and Luke on the ground of supposed discrepancies, the silence of the other Gospels, references to Joseph as the father of Jesus, and the absence of allusions in the epistles. These objections do not seem able to outweigh the fact that in two of the Gospels—the very two that

give the genealogies—the fact of the birth of Jesus from the Virgin is assumed as undoubted, and is circumstantially narrated: in Luke's Gospel by a writer who claims to have "had perfect understanding of all things from the very first" (i. 3). Mark's Gospel cannot be adduced against this, for Mark begins his narrative with the ministry, and it is not open to us to say what his account of Christ's origin, had he given it, would have been. He certainly commences his Gospel with a striking statement—"The beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, *the Son of God*" (i. 1)—but in what sense, or from what cause, he was the Son of God, is not told. St John gives the *divine* genealogy of Jesus, but furnishes no narrative of his earthly origin. He must, however, have had the other Gospels before him, and does not contradict them. His statement—"The Word became flesh" (i. 14)—does not exclude, if it does not presuppose, an exceptional mode of birth. Neither the genealogies in Matthew and Luke, nor the occasional references to Joseph as the father of Jesus, can be adduced as in real opposition to the history, for, had they been felt to be in real antagonism, the Evangelists would not have inserted (still less invented) them. The mystery of Christ's birth cannot be assumed to have been generally known; but, apart from this, Joseph did stand to Jesus *in loco parentis*, and was properly and naturally designated "parent" and "father." [*Cf.* the usage of children by a former marriage in address-

ing step-parents; of children by adoption, etc.] As respects the epistles and the earliest apostolic preaching, it is to be remembered (1) that naturally this was not a matter which would form part of the public preaching or testimony of the apostles, confined as that was chiefly to the facts of the ministry of which they had been eye-witnesses; (2) that it was, even if known, a divine secret to be reverently cherished and delicately handled, especially during the lifetime of Mary herself, from whom alone the facts could be derived; and (3) that there is nothing in the epistles, any more than in the Gospels, inconsistent with this belief. The Johannine declarations, "The Word became flesh"—"He that cometh from above is above all" (iii. 30)—is paralleled by St Paul's "The second man from heaven" (1 Cor. xv.) —"God sent forth His Son, made of a woman" (Gal. iv. 4). The latter declaration of the apostle harmonises well with an exceptional mode of birth, although it does not necessitate it. The unanimity of the Church tradition is referred to in the text.

[The discussion of this subject in Gore's *Dissertations*, pp. 1-68, may be referred to.]

2. *Necessity of the Virgin Birth.*—To the question, whether, granting a creative miracle in Christ's origin, the conditions might not be met by ordinary generation, the reply might be given—*Cui bono?* If a creative origin is postulated, why the complication with the male factor? There is another consideration which Dorner justly emphasises. We do

not lean to a doctrine of immaculate conception when we say that in Mary a fitting instrument had been prepared, both in body and mind, for this service to our race. But natural generation involves the introduction of another influence—of a strain of a different quality and kind. Was there then a second and *male* parent prepared, as Mary was a *female?* Or would not the blending of different, and in fact inferior influences, have been a drawback for the end contemplated—a disturbance calling for a new miracle to check and correct it. Natural generation thus does not afford relief from miracle, but rather doubles the miracle. Dorner's remarks deserve careful study (*Syst. of Doct.*, iii., pp. 347 ff.).

FAITH AND REASON

X

FAITH AND REASON[1]

THE ancient quarrel of the poets and philosophers has its theological counterpart in the controversy about faith and reason. On the one hand, there is the question of their respective provinces, and of the rights of each—the question of delimitation of frontier. On the other hand, there is the question of their relations—whether of peace or war, of antagonism, neutrality, or friendship. The battle is waged in our own day as fiercely as ever, often amidst a cloud of misunderstandings, ambiguities, and confusions of ideas, which hopelessly obscure the issues, and make it impossible for the combatants to recognise each other. Faith looks with suspicion upon science; science sneers at and contemns faith. It is the commonest of all things to find faith and reason pitted against each other as powers necessarily antagonistic. Sometimes faith is spoken of as if it were a disposition to take things on trust without grounds or reasons of any kind—a species of credulity. The

[1] *The Thinker*, December 1893.

believing habit of mind and the scientific habit of mind are held, therefore, to be *in toto* distinct, and terms of accommodation are alleged not to be possible between them. More frequently faith is spoken of as if it were a purely theological affair—not something entering into the ordinary everyday life of the man of the world, without which the house of reason itself would collapse, and science could not advance a single step. Nor have the attempts at the adjustment of these rival claims from opposite sides met with unmixed approval. Neither Anselm's *Credo ut intelligam* nor Abelard's *Intelligo ut credam* has been accepted as a final word upon the subject. Hegel, from the high philosophic side, will have it that faith is but a lower stage of reason—that which is given in feeling or immediate experience being subsequently translated into terms of thought. The Neo-Kantians, on the other hand, are all for deepening the gulf between faith and theoretic knowledge. They will allow of no comings and goings between the two territories. Reason is warned off the ground of faith. Faith is adjured to have nothing to say to reason. The relation desiderated can best be described as that of armed neutrality.

In this long-standing conflict it may seem bold for any one to venture to interpose even with the mildest of amicable suggestions. Yet no harm can come—if much good is not accomplished—from the endeavour to clear away a few of the ambiguities and misconceptions which do so much to befog the

discussion of the subject. A possible error of this kind may be guarded against at the outset. It should carefully be observed that when we speak of faith in its relations to reason, it is only one aspect of faith which comes into view, that, viz., in which it is concerned with the holding or possession of *truth*. Thus only can faith be brought into comparison with reason, or can the question arise of possible collision between them. There are a multitude of other aspects of faith—some of them, it may be held, far more vital and important[1]—but this at least is the aspect in which it comes into consideration here, and it is one which, in a greater or less degree, is implied in all the rest. For a faith which is mere feeling, or vague, indefinite impression, which has no element of enlightenment or knowledge in it, is not a faith which Scripture, at any rate, ever recommends. This is the more to be emphasised that writers like Professor Herrmann, of Marburg, are never weary of denouncing the view which would identify faith with "the holding-for-true" of certain doctrines. There may be justification for his warmth in the excessive stress laid on doctrine by Lutheran scholastic orthodoxy; but, on the other hand, it is not to be overlooked that, in the spiritual sense, there is no faith which does not involve a "holding-

[1] As when faith is viewed in its place in practical religion as trust or confidence in God, as the organ in the appropriation of His grace, as the bond of union with the Saviour, as the active principle in Christian obedience, etc.

for-true" of some fact, truth, declaration, or promise, and sometimes this aspect of the matter is made very prominent.[1]

A convenient starting-point will be found for our inquiry in the well-known definition or description of faith in the Epistle to the Hebrews, xi. 1: "Now faith is the assurance of (or *marg.*, the giving substance to) things hoped for, the proving (*marg.*, test) of things not seen" (R.V.). Here, first, the peculiar province or sphere of faith is defined generically to be—things future and things unseen ("hoped for," "not seen"); and, next, the act of faith itself is described as an "assurance" of these things, and a "proving" of them. If we adopt the alternative rendering of the first of these terms (Gr. *hypostasis*, substance), the meaning is the same—faith is that mental act of realisation which makes the unseen or future object real to us—gives us assurance in regard to it. It is the second term (Gr. *elenchos*, proof) which will be felt to be the more enigmatical. Faith as an "assurance" we can understand, but in what sense is faith a "proof," or "proving," or "test" of its objects? Is not faith, in the ordinary acceptation of it, the very antithesis of proof? that which supplies the lack of proof, or stands instead of it? Nay, would not "proof" destroy faith, and does not the use of such a term import a semi-intellectualism into the conception of faith which is foreign to its nature? It may perhaps occur to us that this,

[1] Specially in John. *Cf.* John iii. 32-4; 1 John v. 5-11.

possibly, is the very reason why faith is described as "proof," viz., that it comes to us instead of, or takes the place of, proof. But it is more satisfactory to suppose that there is some positive reason underlying the use of this term, and, if we are not mistaken, the course of our inquiry will show what it is.

Before dealing with this, however, let us look a little farther at the former of the terms in this passage—"assurance"—expressive of the element of *trust* which enters into all faith. It is of the nature of faith,—it is chief among the facts which constitute it faith,—that, as an assurance regarding things unseen and future, it involves a certain personal and volitional element: an effort, first, to realise that which lies beyond the sphere of sense, and, second, to grasp it with firm assurance, and present it to the mind as real. This personal element, this act of trust, is involved in all faith, however good the grounds may be on which our belief rests; and the further removed from the routine of ordinary experience, the greater, and grander, and less customary the object of our faith is, the more is the mind thrown back on itself, and the stronger is the effort required to maintain a firm and unshaken assurance of its reality. Probably no one has brought out this important aspect of faith with greater force and vividness than Mozley in his lecture on "Belief in a God," in his *Bampton Lectures* on "Miracles," and we may refer to his pages for further illustra-

tions of it. He points out there—what for our present purpose it is so important to observe—how largely faith is present even in our ordinary intellectual operations.

"Not, however," he remarks, "that the existence of God is so clearly seen by reason as to dispense with faith; not from any want of cogency in the reasons, but from the amazing nature of the conclusion—that it is so unparalleled, transcendent, and inconceivable a truth to believe. It requires trust to commit oneself to the conclusion of any reasoning, however strong, when such as this is the conclusion; to put enough dependence and reliance upon any premisses to accept upon the strength of them so immense a result. The issue of the argument is so astonishing, that if we do not tremble for its safety, it must be on account of a practical principle in our minds which enables us to *confide* and trust in reasons, when they are really strong and good ones. Which principle of trust is faith—the same principle by which we repose in a witness of good character who informs us of a marvellous occurrence — so marvellous that the trust in his testimony has to be sustained by an effort of the reasonable will." [1]

"We may remark," he goes on, "that when reason, even in ordinary life or in physical inquiry, is placed under circumstances at all analogous to those of religion, reason becomes, as a consequence of that situation, a kind of faith. . . . Indeed, the remark

[1] P. 100.

may be made that a kind of faith appears to be essential for practical confidence in any reasoning whatever and any premisses, when we are thrown back upon ourselves and do not act mechanically in concert with others. . . . In religion, then, where conclusions are so totally removed from the type of custom, and are so vast and stupendous, this applies the more strongly; but in truth *all* untried conclusions need faith, whatever strong arguments there may be for them. When a scientific man sees various premisses conspiring to direct him to some new truth or law in nature, the aptness with which these coincide and fall in with each other may amount to such strong evidence that he may feel virtually certain of his discovery, yet he does not feel it quite secure till it has stood the test of some crowning experiment. His reason, then, in the interim, is faith," etc.[1]

The important point brought out in these extracts is that all faith involves a certain element of trust, or, as we might phrase it, of risk and venture; yet this does not necessarily reflect on the goodness or sufficiency of the grounds on which the mind rests in its act; and while the highest examples of this kind of faith are found in religion, a similar or analogous faith is constantly required of us in the most ordinary exercises of reason. The bearings of this on our problem will be discussed below.

Thus much for the element of "assurance" in

[1] Pp. 102-3.

faith; but what of faith as "proof" or "proving"? A word must now be given to this part of the subject. It may be observed, then, as another peculiarity of faith, that in every important example of it—in acts of religious faith, above all—there is an *inward* as well as an *outward* element to be taken into account, and faith originates, not from one or other singly, but from the wedding of the two. Without anticipating what belongs to a subsequent stage of the argument, it may be noticed that reason itself, in the last resort, runs back into, draws its certainty from, and tests its conclusions by, principles which are given to it immediately—which cannot be demonstrated. In like manner, our moral judgments go back on instinctive *dicta* of conscience — the expression of primal and indemonstrable moral laws. Our judgments of taste not less clearly draw their sanction from æsthetic canons which seem grounded in the essence of reason. It is by these principles that sometimes consciously, but oftener spontaneously and instinctively, the mind tests the various matters that come before it, judges of their merits, and decides how far they are entitled to its acceptance as true or false, good or evil, beautiful or the reverse. But besides these, there are deep and ineradicable convictions and experiences which spring from the essence of man's nature as a spiritual being—the sense of dependence, for example, the inextinguishable consciousness of freedom and responsibility, the instincts and inspirations which have prompted men

in all ages to anticipate a future life, etc.—and these also constitute a set of laws which determine what it is, and what it is not, possible for us to accept as truth in the moral and religious region. It is when a word, message, revelation, comes to us which accords with these laws of the spiritual being—which strikes and awakens the verifying chord within—that faith is generated. No revelation from without, however strongly attested, could produce faith of a vital kind, unless at the same time there were this inward susceptibility to appeal to: it is the meeting of the outward and the inward which engenders faith. It is the inward principle which is the selecting, testing, verifying, appropriating, principle. "The word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it."[1] This does not mean that the scope of God's word or revelation is to be restricted, in Coleridge's phrase, to that which "finds me." No wise man will make his individual susceptibility — a constantly growing quantity — the measure of revealed truth. But whatever the objective character of any message may be as revelation—however I may be led to submit to it as true on external authority—it is plainly not revelation *to me* unless it comes as light and power into my soul, and penetrates me with a persuasion of its truth. Even the trust we repose in the authority of another in matters that lie beyond our own power

[1] Heb. iv. 2. On the reading and meaning of this passage, see Professor A. B. Davidson's note in his *Hebrews*, *in loc.*

of immediate verification has its source in the confidence with which he is able to inspire us from what we *do* know and can verify regarding him. What is affirmed, therefore, is that in every act of faith, faith itself contributes an element—supplies, as it were, an inward premiss, some principle, fact, instinct, experience, out of which the full practical conviction comes. Hence Christ and His apostles never speak of their words as so much foreign matter to the spirit of man. On the contrary, because of this native affinity with the inner self, they enter the soul as "spirit and life,"[1] are capable of spiritual verification by him who is willing to do God's will,[2] come to the heart "in demonstration of the spirit and of power,"[3] are "quick and powerful," "piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit."[4] "By manifestation of the truth," says Paul, "commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God.[5]

On the basis of these remarks, we are now in a position to inquire more precisely into the relations of faith to reason. In doing this, we have to bear in mind the other part of the description of faith in Hebrews — that it has to do generically with things future and unseen. And as there are various ranges and grades of the unseen, so there are various ranges or spheres within which faith operates—lower and higher orders of faith.

[1] John vi. 63, 68. [2] John vii. 17. [3] 1 Cor. ii. 2.
[4] Heb. iv. 12. [5] 2 Cor. iv. 2.

1. And here, first, it is important to remember how largely faith enters into the ordinary business of life, and—as shown in an earlier part of the paper—is connected with exercises of mind the most strictly theoretic. As respects common life, the fact is notorious. How little of the knowledge which we possess, *e.g.*, rests on evidence which we have personally or scientifically investigated — how much depends on the testimony of others? How few (if any) of the acts which we perform do not involve dependence? Suppose I post a letter, I commit it to agencies and arrangements which are to me invisible, of many of which I know nothing, and over which I have no control. My confidence that the letter will reach its destination can be described as nothing else than an act of faith. So it is with all transactions relating to the unseen, the distant, and the future, that is, with all that lies beyond my direct and immediate experience. Yet, while thus trusting to the good faith of others, and the arrangements of society, have I not the best and most rational grounds for so acting? Here is a case of the simplest order, which shows that whatever faith is, it is not necessarily an acting without sufficient grounds, or in opposition to reason.

It is less frequently observed how, as shown in the quotation from Mozley, an element of faith is involved in the purest and most theoretic exercises of reason itself. Thus a scientific induction, however strong the impression of certainty it may

convey to the mind, is still in a measure an act of faith till it has been experimentally verified.[1] Similarly, every conclusion based on reasoning, however perfect the proof, is an act of faith so long as it has not been put to the test of experience. When Leverrier (and Adams in England) discovered the planet Neptune by pure calculation, he was able to predict the precise time and place in the heavens when this planet could be seen. But as yet no eye had seen it. Up to this point, no one would question that belief in the existence of Neptune was, even for the discoverer, an act of faith. But when the telescope was actually pointed to the heavens, and the new planet was identified in the very spot which had been indicated, faith was changed to sight. Or the grounds of belief may be rational — sufficient to warrant subjective certainty, and to justify action, yet may fall short of demonstration—may yield no more than strong probability. The voyage of Columbus, *e.g.*, was surely, if any ever was, a voyage of faith, yet the result showed that it was a faith which had ample rational justification. Higher still in the order of reason is that type of mind to which discovery comes, as it were, by a sort of divination, a flash of insight, a feeling or intuition of truth, which anticipates the slow processes of proof, and yet from the first is certain

[1] On this account Mr J. J. Murphy, in his *Scientific Bases of Faith*, would go so far as to define faith generally as "certitude without verification"—not "certitude without proof" (p. 110).

of the sureness of its ground. Here, once more, in its purest form, is faith, but it is faith the rational ground of which admits of being laid bare. Nor is the case greatly altered if, from the theoretical speculator, we turn our minds to the practical reformer who, perhaps, has grasped a principle which few others share with him, which is as yet held only in faith, but for which the years to come are to furnish a splendid vindication. The argument, indeed, if it were worth our while to follow it, might be carried much further. It has been hinted at above how reason itself ultimately rests in its exercise on principles that are indemonstrable, and the minuter analysis of the act of knowledge would yield some strange results. What, *e.g.*, is each exercise of memory but an act of faith?[1] Or how shall we logically justify the instinct on which all our inductive inferences depend — the confident expectation of the uniformity of nature? So far from being opposed, the truth is that faith and reason in no department of our experience can ever be held absolutely apart. The one needs, and co-operates with, the other. Their operations interblend. As in the psychology of the senses, sensation and perception are always present together, though in some senses (taste, smell) sensation predominates, in others (sight, touch—the so-called intellectual senses), perception, so faith and reason, as twin powers of the

[1] J. S. Mill says, in criticising Sir Wm. Hamilton, "Our belief in the veracity of memory is evidently ultimate."

soul, invariably act together, and eke out each the other's deficiencies.

2. The examples just given show not only that there is a kind of faith which rests on strictly rational grounds, but that there is scarcely any exercise of reason which does not involve some demand on faith. So far there will be little dispute that faith and reason are not necessarily antagonistic. All these cases, however, agree in two respects—(1) in being related to the present order of things, and (2) capable of sensible—often of scientific—verification. It may be thought that faith in this region is warranted. But the question next arises, How does it stand with a faith which has for its objects "things not seen" of a supersensible or transcendental order; which cannot be sensibly verified; and the belief in which does *not* rest on grounds of reason, such as are most of the objects of religion? That, from the peculiar nature of its objects, religion makes a special demand on faith is already evident from what has been so well said above in the passage quoted from Mozley. It is likewise evident that they do not admit of a sensible verification as the facts and laws of nature do; though it is not to be overlooked that many things in science also do not admit of sensible verification (*e.g.*, the ether, atoms), and further, that religion has its own modes of verification, which are to it a source of as great certainty as in the other case (*e.g.*, Christian experience). Besides, sensible verification, even in the

natural sphere, is not the only kind of verification. Who, *e.g.*, has sensibly verified the existence of a soul in himself or others, or the existence of love, righteousness, and truth? Our mental operations are withdrawn from sense; they are not objects of faith, yet are apprehended through a different faculty from sense.[1] It is granted, however, that both from the transcendental character and greatness of its objects, and the inability sensibly to verify them, religion is pre-eminently a thing of faith; but the main question, after all, relates to the grounds on which that faith is exercised. Are its grounds those of rational proof or demonstration, or even of probability (in which case, as Mozley has above shown, from the greatness and strangeness of its objects, faith would still be required); and if not, how is the faith justified? Here, it is first to be pointed out, there is need for guarding ourselves against ambiguity by a very important distinction. To say that faith has reasonable grounds, or is rationally justified, is very different from saying that in every case it rests on *reasoned* grounds. I may accept on the testimony of another a truth of which I myself could offer no reasoned proof, yet I act perfectly rationally in so doing. Or, what is more germane

[1] It may be observed also that the basis of distinctively Christian faith—viz., the historical Person of the Lord Jesus Christ—from which it rises to the apprehension of the presence, love, Fatherhood of God, and of all the other vital truths of religion, is a verifiable fact in history. The Ritschlian writers have done well to insist on this.

to the present point, my belief may rest on moral grounds, on the testimony and postulates of my moral nature (as in Kant's moral proof for the existence of God), to some extent, even, on feelings, instincts, emotions, aspirations of the soul (as in the case of belief in a future life, though a faith resting on this ground alone is apt to be wavering and insecure), or may be evoked by some impression made on me from without, as by the vastness, grandeur, beauty, order, and regularity of nature, in conjunction with my natural consciousness of dependence on a higher power — yet reason, when questioned on the subject, may not hold any of these beliefs to be irrational, but in the proportion in which they give evidence of springing from the original make and constitution of the soul may pronounce them eminently reasonable. For reason is not the only power in my being. My moral nature has its voice also which must be listened to, even more imperative than that of reason. My instincts, affections, and aspirations; my primary intuitions and experiences, religious and other; those depths of the personality from which are the issues of life, which the plummet of reason cannot sound, have their inalienable rights, which no philosophy of man can afford to ignore. Out of all these, in their contact with our natural and spiritual environment, spring convictions, faiths, which are among the most precious heritages of the human family. These beliefs do not rest on ratiocination, but they

are not the less on that account reasonably held. Moreover, while they do not rest on grounds of reason (save as the possession of a rational nature underlies and is implied in every one of them), it does not follow that reason, even in its theoretic exercise, has no function in regard to them. It has first to examine the character of these beliefs, to trace them, if it can, to their ultimate roots in human nature, to see how far they spring out of its essence and inherent laws, and thus, if indirectly, to afford a certain rational justification of them. But it may go further, and may aid in giving the natural belief a better defined and more perfect form, may even partially verify it by bringing to light the *implicit* reason which underlies so many of our spontaneous beliefs, and is their hidden spring and support; higher still, may be able to show that what is given primarily as a truth of faith is likewise capable of a large measure of theoretical confirmation, and may as justly rank as a truth of reason. The palmary example here is the primary truth of all religion—the existence of God—which is the highest of all truths of faith, and yet may be boldly held to be the most clearly supported of all the truths of reason. We disown, therefore, in its totality, the divorce which some would fain introduce into the sphere of religion between truths of faith and truths of reason. Reason would act irrationally if it did not recognise the existence and rights of the province of faith; faith is unwise if

it does not realise its oneness in root with the truest reason, and does not thankfully avail itself of all the illumination, correction, and corroboration which reason can yield it.

3. Natural religion, however, is not all we have to deal with. What degree of knowledge of God—of His Fatherly love and care, of His all-directing providence and moral government, of a future state of rewards and punishments—would be possible to man were his nature a pure mirror reflecting the divine, it is impossible to say. The fact we have to face is that this is not man's moral condition, and that over the whole wide field of history religious faith has never been able to maintain itself at a high level without the aid of *supernatural* revelation. As a natural growth, it has been dim, uncertain, wavering, and its light has not tended to grow clearer as time has gone on. There are only three great monotheistic religions in the world, and those the three derived from the Bible—Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. It is the belief of the Christian Church, therefore, that God has not left man simply to feel after Him by his unaided efforts, but in historical revelation has given him a better knowledge of Himself, of His will and purposes, and of the way of life; and that this revelation culminates in Jesus Christ — the Word made flesh — at once the supreme Revealer and the supreme Revelation. Our last question, accordingly, is, How does it stand with faith and reason in

relation to the knowledge of God and of divine things coming to us from this supernatural source? On the deep and difficult problem of revelation itself it may be sufficient to recall what was said above — that revelation even when coming to us with the strongest external attestation is not *simply* external; it is only truly revelation when it enters the soul as light and power, and awakens faith through the response it meets with in the spiritual nature. The highest example of this is the Lord Jesus Christ Himself, in whom "the eternal life" is set, as it were, visibly and verifiably before us.[1] What else there is in revelation which we cannot immediately and directly verify must grow for our spirits out of that which we can verify—out of our faith in Christ, or the parts of His teaching which we are able spiritually to assimilate, or the apostolic word in its adaptation to our spiritual nature and needs. This neither excludes Christ's personal authority, nor the corroborative testimony of His miracles and resurrection, nor any of the other lines of what are customarily called the "external evidences," but it throws the weight in the production of spiritual faith on that on which it must always ultimately rest, viz., the character and content of the revelation itself. When, therefore, the question is as to the production or existence of Christian faith, we are heartily in accord with those who think that the grounds of faith in the Chris-

[1] 1 John i. 1-3.

tian religion lie within the Christian system itself, and are not to be sought beyond it. Faith in Christ, in other words, has its grounds in the immediate appeal which the objective revelation in Christ and His Gospel make to the soul—it has its central point in the self-certitude of the consciousness of reconciliation with God through Jesus Christ, and of the new life which springs from this—and is not dependent on, certainly is not produced by, any prior or subsequent demonstration that may be given of its agreement with truths of reason or facts of science. The proof of the reasonableness of the Christian system, of its coherence and agreement with other truths, or with the system of knowledge as a whole, is a confirmation of faith, a corroboration of it, a clearing of it up to itself, a removal of difficulties, a connection of it with science; but it is not the origin of faith. The roots of the faith lie elsewhere, and are otherwise nourished. They involve many other elements besides the intellectual. Any theory of apologetics which proceeds on an opposite hypothesis is, we are convinced, fundamentally astray. Yet in the very statement of these limitations it is already implied that Christian faith stands in no fundamental antagonism to reason, and that the latter has a wide and legitimate sphere open to it—assuming it has been led to adopt the Christian standpoint — in laying bare these harmonies, in showing, *e.g.*, the reasonableness of the Christian view, its coherence with itself and with

its own presuppositions, its agreement with human nature and with the facts of experience; its necessity, even, if an adequate solution is to be afforded of rational and moral problems, and if the theory of the world built up from other standpoints is to receive its satisfactory completion. I do not touch on other fields in which reason will find abundant exercise within the pale of Christianity. These will readily suggest themselves in connection with the historical and critical inquiries, the re-handling of theological problems, and attempts at the adjustment of old standpoints to new discoveries, which evoke so keen an interest at the present hour. The perfect *juste milieu* in the relations of faith and reason in theology is perhaps difficult to attain; but we do well, at least, to cherish the conviction that God in His wisdom has a place in His religion for both, and that nothing but harm can come of seeking to excite jealousy and conflict, where only harmony should prevail.

APPENDIX

ON THE JUDGMENT OF VALUE

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A LITTLE may be said in further elucidation of the place of the much-discussed "judgment of value" in religion. Prof. Reischle, of Halle, published recently (1900) a booklet on "Judgments of Worth and Judgments of Faith" (*Werturteile und Glaubensurteile*), which perhaps loses itself somewhat in distinctions,[1] and ends in what we are compelled to regard as an untenable view of the relations of religion to knowledge, but which deserves all praise for the thoroughgoing manner in which it works out its subject. There are still, however, it seems to us, points of extreme importance on value-judging which even Reischle, in his painstaking analysis, overlooks.

[1] *E.g.*, he distinguishes judgments of value, according to the standpoint from which they are regarded, into verbal, psychological, and thymetic judgments. Religious judgments mostly are not judgments of value in the *verbal* sense (for in form they are judgments of *being*). They are *psychological* judgments of value only in part and indirectly (for in part they are traditionary, and rest on authority). They are properly to be classed as *thymetic* judgments, on which see below (*Cf.* Reischle, pp. 88-93).

Reischle, it need only be said here, avows himself Kantian in his theoretic Agnosticism,[1] and, like Kant, builds up his convictions of the supersensible, and of a moral end of the world, on grounds of the Practical Reason. Religious judgments he places in a class which he calls "thymetic," *i.e.*, judgments whose validity is established, not on theoretic grounds, but on grounds of the heart and conscience.[2] With this he combines the view of a positive revelation of God in Christ. The root-impulse in religion is the desire of freedom from the world, and the Christian religion approves itself through its power to satisfy this need. Thymetic value-judging here resolves itself very much into inward appropriation and verification of a revelation objectively given.[3] This really takes us beyond value-judging into the region of historically ascertained facts, to which our judgments of value attach themselves. A judgment of value is involved in my admiration of a sunset; but the sunset is first there to admire, and my judgments upon it do not rest merely on subjective grounds.

That we do attribute worth or value to objects

[1] P. 114. [2] P. 93.

[3] In a sense, of course, the subjective validity of *any* judgment, even the most purely intellectual, depends on the power of the mind to appreciate the force and sufficiency of the grounds which support it. I assent to a proposition of Euclid because I inwardly perceive the cogency of each step of the demonstration. It might, therefore, conceivably be argued that the ultimate guarantee of the truth of mathematics was the irresistible feeling of certainty in the subject.

within our knowledge, is undeniable. Any judgments in which we do this are "judgments of value." Those objects which we esteem or value, and on that account delight in, or desire to possess, we call "goods." A "good" is a thing which has value to us. Reischle has drawn up a scale of values, but the main heads are of themselves obvious. 1. At the bottom of the scale are *pleasures*, which are valued for their own sakes. 2. Higher are *æsthetic* values (beauty, sublimity, harmony, etc). 3. There are *intellectual* values—truth being loved, desired, and sought after for its own sake. 4. Still higher, because of their unconditional worth, are *moral* values. 5. Finally, there are *spiritual* and *religious* values, of which more below. From connection with these primary values, objects in themselves indifferent acquire secondary or derivative values, which need not here detain us.

Now we come to points in which it appears to us that there is oversight, and sometimes confusion and error.

The usual mode of contrast between "theoretic judgments" and "value-judgments" is that the former express the objective state of a case, as that is known to us by perception or reasoning, whereas the latter—"value-judgments"—express the relation of the object to ourselves as affecting us with pleasure or pain, and exciting in us desire or aversion.[1] Religious knowledge is said to consist in, or move

[1] *Cf.* Reischle, p. 23.

in, such judgments of value (so Ritschl and others), or to rest upon them (Kaftan, etc.). It is, then, claimed that religion is to be kept clear from all contact with theoretic knowledge (in above sense).

I. But a number of important facts and distinctions are here overlooked. And first, with regard to value-judgments themselves.

1. A first important distinction is that between what we may call *objective* and *subjective* values. It is not the case, as the theory affirms, that value-judgments express simply the relation of objects *to us* as causing pleasure or pain, affecting us agreeably or disagreeably, aiding or hindering our personal ends. A far more important class of value-judgments relate to *inherent* and *intrinsic* values: values which belong to the object as existing, and which are quite independent of our personal feelings. The estimable or valuable quality — say courage, unselfishness, purity—may excite in me feelings of admiration or delight; if it is a good I can acquire, may awaken in me a desire to possess it, or pleasure in its possession; but the value which the judgment affirms is *in the object*, not simply in its relations to me, or is in its relations to me only because first of all it is in the object. I have the faculty of recognising and appreciating it, but in no sense is it dependent on my judgment, or state of feeling. Such, to take the highest examples, are holiness or love in God or Christ; such is virtue in a fellow-man; such as righteousness, as the quality

of a good act. It is a quite inadequate account of such judgments to speak of them as simply expressing relation to the subject. On the other hand, value-judgments may and do express the relation to the subject; but even here not simply as exciting pleasure or pain, but as meeting some need, imparting some moral and spiritual benefit, furthering some end. Religion abounds in such judgments, but they practically always have the former class of judgments as their presupposition. We love and trust God because He has revealed Himself to be a Being worthy of our love and trust. Such judgments do excite in us pleasure — produce a state of satisfaction or blessedness; but it is not necessarily the pleasure which they excite which imparts to them their value. Pleasure, as said above, has a value of its own; so far it may be the object of a value-judgment. I may love a thing simply, or *also*, for the pleasure it gives. But to say that *all* value-judgments — even those that express relation—are of this class, is to say that all value-judgments are hedonistic, which is certainly a poor enough account of religion. This distinction is the more important that, by adhering to it, we are taken at once out of the circle of subjective valuations, and brought into contact with objects actually existing; while, by neglecting it, the weight is so strongly laid on values of relation, that the object, however far this may be from the intention, constantly tends to vanish in subjective judgments.

2. A second distinction, not without importance, is that between judgments of value that relate to *being* and judgments of value that relate to *quality*. This is not the broad distinction, so frequently canvassed, between judgments of existence and judgments of value; the distinction intended is in the sphere of value-judgments themselves. Some judgments of value relate to *being*, some to *qualities*, though in the latter also a reference to being is generally implied.

(1) Some judgments relate directly to *being*. Such, *e.g.*, is the judgment of worth—which Ritschl so justly emphasises—which we pass on our own personality in comparison with the material world. This self-conscious personality of mine I compare with the world around me, and judge that I am of more worth than it. I attach a value to my personality and its ends as such. From my Christian standpoint, I attach an infinite value to each human soul. I make a scale of being, and judge the sentient to be of more worth than the insentient, the self-conscious than the unconscious, the personal than the impersonal. Highest of all I judge of God as the One whose being has *absolute* worth—who is the absolutely Good and Perfect One. These are judgments of value, but in their very nature are judgments also on being—on being *as given* ere it can be judged upon; not therefore on being the knowledge of whose existence is based in some way on the value-judgment. A worth-judgment and a

judgment that can only be described as theoretic coincide in the same object.

(2) The greater number of our judgments of value, however, are judgments on *qualities*—but generally on qualities of objects given in experience, or through some medium of objective knowledge (testimony, biography, history, etc.). "'Judgments of value,'" we have remarked elsewhere, "do not hang in the air: they are connected with real objects. If I pass an æsthetic judgment on a beautiful flower, I affirm in the act the existence of the flower, the knowledge of which is given in perception: if I commend a disinterested action, I affirm the reality of the act."[1] There is here, again, no divorce of the value-judgment and theoretic knowledge—both rather are inseparable elements in the one act of knowledge.

3. A third distinction of importance is that between *natural* and *artificial* or *accidental* value-judgments.[2] A value-judgment may declare, as we have seen, a quality inherent in an object; or, again, a value which arises naturally from the relation of the object to the self; or has its necessary ground in man's moral or spiritual constitution. It may, however, be the expression of a value emotionally, imaginatively, putatively, given to the object; not a value which is *real*, or real in that measure or degree, but a value which has its origin in the heightened and coloured feelings of the subject. The

[1] *Ritschlian Theology*, p. 246.

[2] *Cf.* Reischle, p. 49. Our idea, however, is different from his.

imaginary charms and perfections with which one invests a beloved object is a familiar illustration. The case is not one of objective value-judging, but of idealisation. In another direction, the judgment may express a value purely individual, the result of peculiarity of taste, of association, of acquired, or it may be depraved, liking. It is specially the intrusion of the former—the imaginative and idealising —tendency that has to be guarded against when we speak of objects having "a religious value," and Ritschl and his followers, we think, have not been always sufficiently watchful against this danger. When value-judging is freed from objective control and resolved so largely into subjective estimations, the transition is easy to a play of imagination which gets far enough from the actual truth, and creates its object after its own liking.

4. Yet another distinction is that made in certain of the theories between *value-judgments proper*, and *theoretic judgments based on these* (Kaftan). Thus, *e.g.*, if I postulate God as a necessary implication of my moral consciousness, or of the worth of my personality, the affirmation that springs from this, viz.: that God *is*, and is the Author and Ruler of the World for a moral end, is not, in strictness, a value-judgment, but a judgment of existence, or theoretic judgment—one based, indeed, on a value-judgment, but even that a judgment about self, not about God. That this is a true distinction Reischle also admits, but abolishes it again by calling religious judgments

"thymetic," as depending for their validity on internal determinations.

Such other distinctions as that made by Ritschl between concomitant and independent value-judgments may here be passed over. Ritschl's distinction is faulty in so far as it tends to dissociate value-judgments in religion from given *objects*.

II. It is already evident from these considerations that there is not, and cannot be, that opposition between "value-" and "theoretic" judgments which some have affirmed; and that it is an error to set these up as distinct and mutually exclusive classes of judgments, and to place religion in the one, while debarring it from the other. The objects to which our theoretic judgments apply are also objects of our worth-judgments; conversely, theoretic judgments have a place in the sphere of religion. They are even more essential in religion than in morals and æsthetics; for in religion we are dealing immediately with relations to a real Being, and that the Being who is the ground of all reality. The mutual relations and inseparable implications of the two spheres will be better understood when certain things are considered which again are frequently overlooked.

1. If by "theoretic judgments" are meant purely *intellectual judgments*, it is to be observed that these are by no means coterminous with knowledge even in the sphere of outward cognition. There is no sphere of knowledge—not even that which is called "world-knowledge"—in which intellectual judgments

alone rule. The world given in perception and investigated by science is not such a world. A domain of purely theoretic knowledge, in the above acceptation, is a fiction. Relations of space and time, of number, of causation, furnish but the framework of our knowledge. The objects of the outer world are clothed with qualities which pure intellect could not apprehend—with sounds, colours, tastes, odours, harmonies, etc.— qualities which appeal to, indeed have their sole being in, sentiency. The sweetness of an orange is as truly the object of a value-judgment (if of a lower kind) as the beauty of a flower, or the purity of a soul. Value-judging, therefore, enters deeply into all our knowledge, even in the theoretic domain: it applies to the same objects as the theoretic judgments, and completes our knowledge of them.

2. It is not less true, on the other hand, that all value-judgments in the *moral* and *religious* spheres are *inseparably associated with theoretic activities and theoretic judgments.*

(1) It is the fact that man is rational, thinking spirit which creates for him the *possibility* of religion, and makes him capable of religious value-judgments, or of judgments of any kind. Only in such a nature could religion appear. Only such a being is capable of rising to the idea of God, or of so much as conceiving of eternity, infinity, immortality, duty. It is man's rationality, therefore, which is the root-fact of even his capacity for

religion. Hegel was undoubtedly right thus far at least. It is only through reason that the mind is capable of framing such an idea as that of God. Reason in man not only creates the possibility of, but gives the impulse, and leads man instinctively to rise to such a conception — impels him, that is, by a necessary movement of spirit, to ascend from the caused to the uncaused, from the finite to the infinite, from the temporal to the eternal, from his own self-conscious personality and morally legislative reason to a Supreme Personal Intelligence and Moral Lawgiver and Ruler. What peculiarly constitutes a religious judgment is that it has relation to *God*. It is not in the predicates we apply to God — though it might seem to be so — that the peculiarity of the religious value-judgment consists. To say of God that He is loving, righteous, merciful, is not to frame judgments different in *kind* from those which we employ when we attribute love, or justice, or mercy to our fellow-men. The difference in the religious judgment is that these things are now affirmed of *God*—of One who is thought of (in whatever religious language we may clothe the idea) as the supreme, infinite, eternal Source of all being, wisdom, power, holiness, and love — Author and Sustainer of all that is. But this thought of God is neither in itself a value-judgment, nor springs wholly, though it does in part (through the moral nature), from value-judgments; but is involved in our whole nature as rational and moral beings.

(2) A second fact, the full bearings of which are not always considered, is, that everything we call *value-judging falls necessarily within, and is, if we may so say, ensphered by, the theoretic consciousness.* The value-judgment, like every other element in our experience, falls within self-consciousness. This is often overlooked. It is assumed that reason, or the theoretic consciousness, has to do only with purely intellectual truths. But this is palpably an error. Self-consciousness is the purest act of knowledge of which we are capable, but within it lies everything that belongs to mental, moral, and spiritual experience. It surveys in its reflective exercise the whole realm of inner experience. It takes knowledge of it, discriminates its parts, investigates, judges, and reasons upon it. There is not one self-consciousness for value-judgments and another for theoretic judgments. Our self-consciousness is *one.*[1] In one act it embraces all the contents. A sensation, *e.g.*, is not only felt, but *known.* We can reflect on our feelings, affections, emotions; on our æsthetic, moral, and religious experiences. How else should there be possible philosophies of art, of ethics, of religion? So far, therefore, from value-judgments being set in a compartment distinct from theoretic judgments, the theoretic self-consciousness is the wider activity which embraces value-judgments with other judgments in its one act of knowledge.

[1] Reischle would admit the fact, but fails to give it its due weight for his problem.

(3) It is already implied in these considerations that *a theoretic element is involved in the value-judgment itself.* It is not simply that the value-judgment has reference to an object which, even in religion, is given through some means that involve theoretic activities. But the value-judgment, in its own nature, is inseparable from theoretic elements. It has the rational self as its presupposition and condition of its possibility; it appears as a constituent element of a rational self-consciousness; but still more, in its very character as "judgment," it shows that rational functions are involved. For "judgment" is essentially the act of a thinking, as distinct from a feeling and willing, being; the ordinary mental operations of observation, memory, reflection, distinction of subject and object, of subject and predicate, in short, all logical and rational categories, are implied in it: how then can it claim to set up house, as it were, for itself, in complete dissociation from theoretic reason? The simple fact that these rational operations are capable of being pressed into the service of the value-judgment, that it is amenable to manipulation by them, proves the falsity of the division that is sought to be effected.

It does not relieve the difficulty created by the too wide severance of the theoretic and value judgments to bring in the idea of *revelation.* If the stress is laid on the *positivism* of the revelation, in that very fact it is manifest, as before remarked, that we

have transcended the sphere of pure value-judgments. If, on the other hand, it is the *content* of the revelation in which its peculiar value is supposed to lie, it is to be remembered that even revelation cannot raise our knowledge above the essential limitations of all religious knowledge, *i.e.*, above subjective valuations. It is to be observed, however, that Jesus did not take up this exclusive attitude on the subject of religious knowledge. Jesus did not come to reveal to men that there is a God. He assumed that to be known, and brought to the world fuller and clearer knowledge of the character and will of this Heavenly Father. He came above all to reconcile the world to God. Strange, indeed, it would be, if, believing in God as the Almighty Author of this world and Ruler in providence and history, we were yet compelled to affirm that no trace of His being, action, character, were anywhere discernible,—that neither the reason of man, nor the world He has made, had any intelligible word to utter regarding Him.

We conclude with the remark that, so far as the introduction of the idea of value-judging is assumed to mark a new epoch in theology, the claim appears to be baseless. There is nothing true in this theory which a sound theology has not always recognised. There has never been the idea on the part of any one of running the whole of religious knowledge into purely intellectual propositions. God is a Spirit, and is to be worshipped in spirit and in truth. Spiritual things can only be spiritually discerned.

Religious knowledge is conditioned throughout by the state of the heart and the obedience of the life. Even the doctrinal propositions of theology—if intellectual in form—embrace, just as self-consciousness does, all the value-elements of religion. They relate throughout to spiritual magnitudes and spiritual transactions. The fruit is unto holiness, and the end everlasting life.

INDEX

Abbott, Dr Lyman, on evolution and miracle, 164.

Bender, W., 22, 58-9; theory of religion, 68 ff.

Bruce, Prof. A., on Christianity without miracle, 135; on miraculous conception, 224, 233.

Charles, R. H., on Christ's claim, 144.

Christ, impression of God in, 7 ff., 14, 25, 28, 44, 65; as principle of revelation, 23, 41, 44; "Godhead" of, 24-5, 46-7, 67 ff., 85, 110, 147-8; claims of, 136 ff., 193-4; His knowledge supernatural, 130, 135 ff.; relation to sacraments, 197-8.

Christianity, ground of faith in (Herrmann), 7 ff., 65, 260; proof of (Kaftan), 63 ff.; essence of (Harnack), 120, 123, 132; Sabatier on, 158; doctrine in, 147, 173.

Ecke, G., on school of Ritschl, 64, 71-2, 78, 97.

Evolution, influence on Sabatier, 155, 162; Sabatier's view of, 163; Lyman Abbott on, 164; evolution and dogma, 159-60, 167, 170; limits of, 228; relation to mind, 228-9; Prof. Calderwood on, 228; relation to body 230; bearing on sinlessness, 231; on incarnation, 232.

Faith, origin and certainty of Christian faith, 7 ff., 14; Ritschlian divorce from theoretic thought, 16 ff., 22-3, 25, 42 ff., 55, 58 ff., 81, 104 ff., 168; relation to reason, 241 ff.; Scriptural view of, 244; element of trust in, 245 ff.; verifying principle in, 248 ff.; place in ordinary life, 251; in theoretic exercises, 251; with respect to supersensible reality, 254; to supernatural revelation, 258.

Garvie, A. E., his *Ritschlian Theology*, 77 ff.; on Ritschl's philosophy, 81, 105; on judgments of value, 82, 85, 103, 110; on sin and guilt, 85, 99, 101, 103, 110; on mysticism, 83 ff.; on "Godhead" of Christ, 85; on Christ's resurrection, 84, 97.

Gospels, historicity of, 12, 15; picture of Jesus in, 136 ff.,

193 ff.; synoptics and Gospel of John, 144-5, 194.

Harnack, A., 5, 37, 55, 78, 90, 221; Berlin lectures, 115 ff.; on essence of Christianity, 120, 123, 132; Jesus and His Gospel, 123, 129, 133, 146; on Christology, 125, 129-30, 136 ff., 148; on Gospel in history, 126 ff.; on miracle, 119, 122, 131; on Easter Faith, 131, 144; defects of view, 122, 125-6, 128-9, 133 ff.

Herrmann, W., 5, 22, 55, 65, 86, 243; on knowledge, 18, 57 ff.; theory of religion, 17, 22, 62, 65; on revelation in Christ, 5 ff., 14, 28, 65-6; on faith and certainty, 10 ff., 12 ff., 67; on Christology, 27, 67-8, 86; his *Verkehr*, 9, 12-13, 20, 28, 66, 126, 139.

Judgments of value, 17, 19, 29, 35, 42-3, 59, 60, 82-3; Appendix, 265 ff.

Kaftan, J., relation to Ritschl, 5, 54, 55; on knowledge, 21, 57, 58 ff.; theory of religion, 22, 62-3; apologetics, 63 ff.; on judgments of value, 17, 60, 268, 272; on kingdom of God, 24, 64-6; on Christology, 67-8; on the exalted Christ, 27, 66; his *Dogmatik*, 72.

Kant, on knowledge, 18, 21, 39, 106, 155, 168; moral theory of, 58-9, 160, 256, 266; on kingdom of God, 24, 45.

Kingdom of God, place of idea in Ritschlianism, 23, 45, 55, 64, 66, 72, 99; *see* Kant.

Knowledge, theories of, *see* Kant, Ritschl, Herrmann, Kaftan, Sabatier.

Loofs, F., 85, 96.

McGiffert, A. C., on Apostolic Christianity, 180 ff.; critical views, 183, 215; on later Judaism, 185; on John the Baptist, 186-7; estimate of Jesus, 188 ff.; his view compared with Gospels, 193 ff.; on the resurrection, 196; on the sacraments, 197-9; on Pentecost, 200 ff.; on apostles, 203; on Paul's conversion, 204-5; on Paul's theology, 206 ff.; on Paul's apostleship, 210; alleged legalism of early believers, 212-13.

Ménégoz, E., his *Fidéisme*, 152, 165, 169, 174-5; see *Symbolo-Fidéisme*.

Miraculous Conception, disputes regarding, 221 ff., 225; view of early Church, 223; critical objections, 224, 235; Prof. Bruce on, 224, 233; dogmatic importance of, 226, 232, 237; relation to evolution, 227.

Philosophy, excluded from theology, 16 ff., 41 ff., 45, 46-7, 55, 81.

Reason, relation to faith, *see* Faith.

Reischle, D. M., 22, 56; on judgments of value, 265 ff.

Religion, theories of, 21-2, 62, 69, 156, 160; *see* Ritschl, Sabatier, etc.

Revelation, Herrmann on, 8 ff.; Ritschl on, 107; Sabatier on, 157.

Ritschl, A., his life, 33 ff.; character, 34-5, 79; influence, 3, 33, 37, 53 ff., 77, 111, 169; school, 4-5, 14, 21 ff., 49 ff., 53 ff., 71, 77 ff., 96; works, 3, 37, 40.

—— theology of, its merits, 5, 14, 30, 38, 44, 80, 92; its defects, 18 ff., 25, 29, 43-4, 47, 49, 80 ff., 92, 104, 110; positive character of, 23, 55, 80; theory of knowledge, 16 ff., 39, 55, 58, 69, 81, 105, 168; theory of religion, 22, 44, 62, 104; on value-judgments, 17 ff., 29, 42, 58 ff., 82 ff., 94, 103 ff., 108, 155, 169; on kingdom of God, 23-4, 30, 39, 45, 66, 123; on revelation, 7, 18, 23, 29, 30, 41, 44, 46, 55, 64, 80, 107, 157 ff., on "Godhead" of Christ, 26, 46, 67, 85, 110; on resurrection of Christ, 16, 47, 84, 94, 96 ff., 122 ff.; on atonement, 26, 48, 68, 110; antagonism to mysticism, 27, 49, 66, 81, 83-4.

Sabatier, A., his *Philosophy of Religion*, 152 ff.; early beliefs, 154; theory of religion, 156, 160; on miracle, 157, 163; on essence of Christianity, 158; on religion and dogma, 158-9, 161, 164 ff.; on "symbol" in religion, 165, 171 ff., 175; theory of knowledge, 168 ff.

Schleiermacher, F., 23, 54, 115.

Schrempf, C., 36, 221-5.

Sin and guilt, 4, 7-8, 26, 29, 55, 84, 95, 99 ff.

Subjectivity, of Ritschl, 93-4, 103; of Lotze, 106; of Ritschlian theologians, 22, 57; of Bender, 22, 68 ff.

Swing, A. T., his *Ritschlian Theology*, 89 ff.; on critics of Ritschl, 90 ff.; on Christ's resurrection, 94, 96 ff.; on sin and guilt, 95, 99 ff.; on knowledge, 105; on subjectivity of Ritschl, 93-4, 103 ff.; on judgments of value, 94, 108; on "Godhead" of Christ, 110; on redemption, 110.

Symbolo - Fidéisme, origin of name, 152; meaning of, 165, 168, 174; *see* Sabatier, Ménégoz.

Theology, the New, character of, 122, 153-4, 180, 224.

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